



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Sawtooth
National
Forest

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Twin Falls, ID 83301-7976
Telephone: (208) 737-3200

RECEIVED

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AUG 22 1997

Date: August 19, 1997

Department of Water Resources
Southern Region

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed for your review and comment is a copy of the Pre-decisional Environmental Assessment (EA) for the approval of a Master Development Plan for Pomerelle Ski Area and to extend the term of the Special Use Permit which authorizes Pomerelle's continued operation.

Three alternatives have been examined in addition to the proposal offered by Pomerelle. We have identified Alternative D as our preferred Alternative. This would provide for all of the developmental components of Pomerelle's proposal and at the same time protect the current biological situation in Howell Cr. by restricting water use to the current level.

The main reason for identifying Alternative D as the preferred alternative is to meet the management conditions established in the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan for the Sawtooth National Forest and the recently appended Native Inland Fish Strategy which provide specific protection for fisheries in Howell Cr.

Although a preferred Alternative has been identified, my final decision on which Alternative to implement has not been made. You can help me in this decision by providing written review comments on the EA. Your comments should be mailed to the following address:

Forest Supervisor
Sawtooth National Forest
2647 Kimberly Rd. East
Twin Falls, ID 83301

Comments must be postmarked or received no later than **September 23, 1997**. They should be as specific as possible and contain the following:

- 1) your *Name, Address*, and if possible *Telephone Number*
- 2) *Title of the Document* on which comment is being submitted
- 3) *Specific facts or comments along with supporting reasons* that you believe the Forest Supervisor should consider in reaching a decision.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 1215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency

Comments provided to BAT team in
phone conv. 8/21/97 with DJ & AD

145-04119





to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 15 days.

Copies of the Proposed Master Development Plan are available for review at either the Burley Ranger District Office, 3650 South Overland Ave. Burley, ID or at the Forest Supervisor's Office, 2647 Kimberly Rd. East, Twin Falls. If you have any questions regarding this proposal, please contact Terry Fletcher, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at (208) 737-3224 or District Ranger Pete Peterson at (208) 678-0430.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William P. Levere".

WILLIAM P. LEVERE
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary shortcoming of Pomerelle is the constraints associated with skier congestion in the base area. To provide the best possible experience for today's users of the slopes, whether they are on conventional or shaped skis, snowboards, or adaptive equipment, a dramatic increase in the space for staging is needed. Therefore, two primary projects are proposed: (1) widening of ski trail arrivals near the existing day lodge, and (2) creation of a new Learning Center dedicated largely to teaching and a more diversified and higher level of service. In addition to these projects, the 1996 Master Development Plan proposes to add new lifts and trails to Pomerelle, giving the ski area the ability to comfortably accommodate additional skiers and add new interest to terrain offered.

This master plan proposes a series of measures to make the ski area more user-friendly. The first measure is to widen or re-route trails to improve skier circulation. The proposed trail modifications offer an opportunity for Pomerelle to work with the Forest Service to improve forest stands in Howell Canyon.

The second measure is to move teaching slopes approximately 250 vertical feet uphill from the existing base, offering significantly larger gentle slopes, complementing the existing ski area. Since that terrain is located above the existing base, a new parking and staging area is needed. It will be much easier, particularly for the physically challenged skiers, to access the ski area from the new parking lot. The return to the upper lot is possible from the top of, all 3 lifts and 2 tows, and is the first element to be constructed for operation, as early as Winter 1997/98. The lifts will have in-kind ability utilization: for example kids will find a play area, isolated from skier traffic, just next to the lodge. A gentle bowl will serve those that graduate from the first gliding experience. Skiers and snowboard riders will be able to glide to their appropriate ability slopes and disperse to the 3 chair lift terminals. The popular Milk Run will be served by a small new triple chair lift, almost duplicating the line of a chair lift retired in 1973. The insertion of new lifts, trails and lodge involves minimal vegetative change; however the doubling of site capacity to 2000 skiers can be achieved by a much better organized mountain traffic pattern. It was found that the new wind-sheltered parking lot could be built large enough to also accommodate other winter sports parties, i.e., cross country skiers and snowmobile users destined beyond the ski area boundary. With proper management, this joint parking venture may resolve user conflicts, save operating costs and provide better services to non-skiers.

Skier services will be consolidated in a new day lodge, called the Learning Center, accessed by a new entry off the Howell Canyon Road scheduled for paving during Summer 1997. The Learning Center will overlook the existing ski area from a sunny location. Broad-based programming recognizes the opportunity for multi-lingual teaching, racing and night skiing, and will be accompanied by a substantial increase in snowmaking coverage. The location advantage and timing of the new Learning Center with the Howell Canyon Road improvements is expected to elevate Pomerelle to a four seasons resort. The master plan includes summer uses, such as, lift-carried mountain biking, interpretive forest trails, outdoor concerts, workshops, seminars, arts, family reunions, weddings and corporate functions, offering a multi-seasonal facility use.

predecisional

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

OF

POMERELLE SKI RESORT

MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Sawtooth National Forest
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

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CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION - Pomerelle Ski Area is located 18 miles southeast of Burley, Idaho, within the Sawtooth National Forest. One of the pioneer skiing opportunities in southern Idaho, it began as Mount Harrison Ski Area in the lower reaches of Howell Canyon in the early 1940's. Operating with only minimal facilities before and after World War II, the winter sports site was moved to its present location and the original Pomerelle permit was issued in 1967 to a group of local skiing enthusiasts. The present owner, Andrwood, Incorporated, purchased the ski area from the original Pomerelle, Incorporated, in 1973 and has made steady improvement to the area and has expanded the skiing opportunity in southern Idaho throughout the ensuing years.

The current facilities include 1 triple chairlift, 1 double chairlift, 1 rope tow and 1 handle tow. The area offers 1,000 ft. vertical drop (8680 to 7700 ft.), 137 acres of skiable runs, and night skiing on approximately 1/3 of the developed acreage. The lodge and lifts are operated 7 days a week from Thanksgiving to Easter in typical snow years and night skiing is offered 5 nights a week from mid-December through mid-March. The current parking facility accommodates 400 vehicles.

The Pomerelle Ski School and professional and volunteer members of the National Ski Patrol continually offer the latest teaching and skier care techniques. Pomerelle is known for its focus on the beginner and family skier and for offering a consistently high quality, groomed skiing experience.

Andrwood managers forecast the need to expand their teaching opportunity in order to keep pace with the locally growing demand for entry level skiing and snowboarding at an affordable price. Providing uncongested beginner areas without the intimidation of mixing with higher skilled enthusiasts, adding additional lodge and learning center facilities and relieving the crowding in limited parking areas are highlights of the winter portion of a recently proposed Master Development Plan. Summer season proposals include opening the lodge to provide food and equipment rental services, operating a system of hiker and non-motorized trails, and offering concerts, conferences, and catered events at the new lodge facility.

1.1.1 PROPONENT'S PROPOSAL and PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION

The Proponent's Proposal is necessary to position Pomerelle Ski Area to meet the expanding demands for increased summer and winter recreation opportunities.

The general provisions of the proposed Master Development Plan (MDP) include:

1) Expand the existing Permit Area Boundary to include approx. 65 additional acres on the ridge north of Buttermilk run for construction of:

a) new lodge / learning center - Pomerelle's business strategy targets first time skiers and families as primary customers. An improved facility to incorporate state-of-the-art teaching tools, videos, etc. is desired.

b) specific ski slopes maintained for the beginner skier to be located to avoid traffic conflicts with more experienced skiers

c) additional parking for approx. 410 cars and 140 truck/trailer combinations. Parking at the existing lodge has for years been a limiting factor. New facilities will increase capacity while also providing an opportunity for nordic skiers and snowmobilers to access the Lodge.

d) Establish a snowmaking system to provide consistent snow cover for beginner slopes, race courses, and high traffic areas.

2) Installation of 1 chair lift and 2 handle tows oriented to the beginner skier traffic on and adjacent to Milk Run.

3) Expand the night lighting system to increase the acres of night skiing.

4) Extend the use of the total Pomerelle facility to provide for summer season opportunities to include:

a) music/theater events

b) conferences

c) weddings and reunions

d) hobby/art classes and seminars

e) natural resource based recreation activities for the public

f) a system of summer trails

5) Relocate the existing maintenance building to the existing rope tow slope and expand to allow employee dormitory space and better equipment maintenance area.

6) Accelerate the timber stand improvements, proposed in the Forest Service Timber Management Plan, to remove diseased and dying timber stand components so as to provide greater longevity and healthier timber stands and re-align

and/or widen selected ski runs to provide truer fall-line skiing opportunity. By combining this improvement activity with proposed changes to the ski runs, a more effective program can be achieved in less time.

7) Recontour selected small areas to eliminate skier congestion and severe slope situations and revegetate larger portions of the area to promote better soil stabilization, greater ground cover ratio and more diverse species composition.

[see figures 1 and 2]

Project Area Description

Pomerelle Ski Area is located in the Albion Division of the Burley Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest. The resort is situated in the upper portion of Howell Canyon and is accessed by Forest Road No. 549; soon to be designated Forest Highway 75, and currently being paved. Jurisdiction and maintenance is the responsibility of Cassia County and access will be provided year-round to the ski area and during summer months to the very top of the mountain.

The project area is located specifically in T 13 S, R 24 E, S 1,2,11, and 12, Boise Meridian. The project area includes the present area permitted to Andrwood, Inc. and additional acres of Management Area 1D as described by the Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

1.1.2 Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action

Andrwood has determined that the existing facilities at Pomerelle Ski Area are not able to continue to meet the needs of an expanding winter recreation market. Additional parking, lodge facilities, teaching areas, and less congested ski runs will soon be needed to accommodate local and regional recreationists. Having examined the current and potential recreation market, Andrwood proposes to expand their facilities at Pomerelle Ski Area to accommodate the anticipated growth. Additionally, Andrwood has examined the potential for summer season recreation and has determined that they can make new opportunities for that market as well. The Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (FLRMP) for the Sawtooth National Forest has also foreseen these possibilities and has directed that the Pomerelle area be made primarily available for these purposes.

The Purpose of this Environmental Assessment is to determine the effects of actions proposed by Andrwood or of alternatives to the initial proposal. This information is needed to establish the Approved Master Development Plan (MDP) which will guide future use and development of Pomerelle Ski Area. Upon approval of the MDP the Forest Service will extend the current Special Use Permit issued to Andrwood, Inc. for an additional 25 years, as provided for in the terms of the Permit.



Existing and Proposed Lifts

Lift Type	Existing				Proposed					
	Rope Tow	Double Chair	Triple Chair	Exist. Total	Double Chair	Triple Chair	Kids Tow	Graduate Tow	New Triple	Prop. Total
Vertical ft	50	597	943	1590	597	943	65	75	250	1930
Horizontal ft	400	3011	4210	7621	3011	4210	350	650	1600	9821
Lift Slope avg. %	13	20	22	21	20	22	19	12	16	20%
Length ft	403	3070	4314	0	3070	4314	356	654	1619	10014
Design Capacity p/h	300	1200	1200	0	1200	1800	300	400	1800	
VTF million p-ft/h	0.015	0.716	1.132	1.863	0.716	1.697	0.020	0.030	0.450	2.913
Open hours	7	12	7	0	12	7	12	12	12	
Efficiency per day	0	6	7	13	0.90	0.85	0.70	0.80	0.82	
VTF/day million	0.053	6.448	6.733	13.233	6.448	10.10	0.137	0.240	3.690	20.614
Active Skier Density	31	15	9	15	15	9	32	26	23	
Net Acre Increment	0	25	48	72	25	71	0	1	15	112
First Practice	16	0	0	16	0	0	28	41	111	180
Beginners	0	175	57	232	175	86	0	6	333	599
Intermediates	0	250	200	451	250	301	0	3	55	609
Advanced Skiers	0	25	258	283	25	387	0	0	0	412
Snowboard Users	1	6	9	0	50	86	0	9	55	200
Active Skiers (ASP)	10	375	429	815	375	644	14	35	333	1401
Inactive Skiers	7	125	143	275	125	215	14	24	222	599
SAOT	17	500	573	1090	500	859	28	59	554	2000
SAOT Change	-17					286	28	59	554	910

Fig. 2

1.1.3 Objectives of the Master Development Plan

In addition to confirming its continued public offering Pomerelle has examined and clarified its role in the skier and recreation market place in Southern Idaho. Through Master Planning, a fuller spectrum of skier and summer recreationist needs is being addressed. The developments and activities proposed in this Master Development Plan are intended to keep Pomerelle well situated to meet the needs of specific customer targets - the beginner skier, the young family in need of an affordable recreation experience, the local skier not interested in the flash and dash of high-end resort skiing and the recreationist or conference goer seeking selected indoor and outdoor opportunity in a mountain setting.

Aligning with the FLRMP, the Objectives of the Pomerelle MDP are:

1. "Provide an affordable outdoor recreation experience in a healthy mountain environment for everyone";
2. "Make educational opportunities available for all levels of skiing abilities and summer visitors";
3. "Provide clean, healthy, and safe food services at reasonable cost";
4. "Maintain efficient operation of all aspects of the resort".

Pomerelle MDP pg. 5

1.2 Other EIS/EA's which influence the scope of this EA

In 1987 the Intermountain Regional Forester approved the Forest Lands and Resource Management Plan (FLRMP) for the Sawtooth National Forest. It identified Management Area 1D and prescribed the management goal "...to provide accessible facilities for downhill skiing on existing sites, and expansion of existing sites..." and further "...ski area development and use is (to be) integrated with other resource activities to provide healthy tree stands, vegetative diversity, and forage production for wildlife and livestock...the visual resource is managed within the functional limits of the winter sports objectives...Summer recreation activities area encouraged. (see Chap.IV, pg 117, Sawtooth FLRMP).

The Plan also identified Management Area (1B) on the north flank of Mt. Harrison as a separate potential area. The two areas are not contiguous and only the current activity and the Proposed expansion within M.A. 1D are being considered in this Master Development Plan and NEPA Analysis.

In July of 1995 the Regional Foresters of the Northern, Intermountain, and Pacific Northwest Regions of the Forest Service announced their decision to select Alternative D of the Environmental Assessment for the Native Inland Fish Strategy (commonly referred to as INFISH). This decision adopted interim management direction for the

protection of native fish and their necessary habitats for a period of approximately 18 months pending the finalization of the Environmental Assessment for the Upper Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Analysis. Due to delays in the release of this later decision document, the INFISH decision has been extended. INFISH directives are incorporated by reference into existing Forest Management Plans.

A 1992 Environmental Assessment of the Howell Canyon Forest Health and Ecosystem Management Project included examinations of the conditions of forest resources in the Pomerelle Ski Area. It approved vegetation management projects throughout the canyon, including work sites within Pomerelle Ski Area. Completion of the project work within the ski area has been deferred pending the outcome of Master Planning efforts by Pomerelle. The Forest is prepared to implement timber stand improvements.

1.3 Decisions to be Made

The Special Use Permit which authorizes Andrwood, Inc., to operate Pomerelle Ski Area requires that by no later than the 5 year anniversary of the issuance of the Permit, the Permittee must prepare for approval by the Forest Supervisor, a Master Development Plan (MDP) which describes in detail the operation, development, expansion (if appropriate) and future of the permitted activity. Upon approval of the MDP, the term of the Permit is to be extended twenty five years. In the case of Pomerelle the Permit would be extended until December 31, 2023.

The Forest Supervisor of the Sawtooth National Forest will be the Responsible Official for making these decisions. Based on the analysis of the potential effects of implementing the proposal, or an Alternative to the proposal, the comments received from the public and other agencies as well as the input from Forest resource management specialists, the Forest Supervisor will make the following decisions:

1. Does the proposed Master Development Plan propose actions which would have significant environmental effects and therefore require the agency to publish an Environmental Impact Statement?

2. Can the Proposal or an Alternative to the Proposal, either with possible mitigations, be approved? and if so:

What existing facilities on NFS lands should be upgraded;

What new facilities should be constructed on NFS lands;

If the permit area should be expanded to the north to accommodate construction of the new lodge and parking as proposed;

What operating standards, mitigations measures, and monitoring activities should be applied to the project.

The Forest Supervisor will issue a Decision Notice documenting the rationale for his decision. The Decision Notice will consider pertinent comments from the public and other agencies and will describe any provisions, mitigation measures, or other considerations to be included in the Special Use Permit, if any.

1.4 Scoping and Identification of Issues

At the outset of the planning activity, a scoping effort was conducted to determine what, if any, issues might surface in response to the proposed expansion and increased level of development and use. A total of 121 letters was received. (37 personal letters, 56 personal letters from a school student project, and 28 in response to an effort initiated by Pomerelle Ski Area. All letters were read and analyzed for content. Although none were initially considered significant, the following issues and items of discussion have been recognized:

1. Water Rights
2. Support for the Proposal
3. Mt. Harrison road
4. Recreation opportunities other than winter
5. Forest Health
6. Specific Facilities
7. Permit Boundary Expansion
8. Scoping Issues/ Alternatives
9. Other Comments

The information gained through the initial scoping effort has been used in the refinement of the Proposed Master Plan and in the formulation of Alternatives to the Proponent's Proposal. In one case it resulted in an informally negotiated adjustment of plan which now appears to benefit both parties. A more detailed summary of the scoping effort is included in Appendix A.

Since the initial scoping, interest in water rights, water availability, and potential impacts to fisheries in Howell Cr. has heightened and these issues are now collectively recognized as having an increased level of concern. The availability of water and the associated potential impacts to fisheries have been the focus of Alternatives to the Proponent's Proposal.

1.5 PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED

Several permits and approvals by both the Forest Service and other jurisdictional agencies would be required before implementation of the Proponent's Proposal. These include:

Decision Notice, in accordance with the procedures of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended, by the Forest Supervisor of the Sawtooth National Forest approving either the Proposed Master Development Plan or an Alternative Plan and extending both the term and boundary of the Special Use Permit.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Threatened and Endangered Species, via preparation of a Biological Assessment in compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

Compliance with the rules governing water quality standards and wastewater treatment requirements administered by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Environmental Quality.

Acquisition of Water Rights from the Idaho Department of Water Resources for withdrawal of water from Bennett Spring, Howell Cr. or its tributaries or from other sources to be used for the permitted activities.

Concurrence by the State Historic Preservation Officer that no artifacts, properties or sites eligible for Nomination to the Register of National Historic Places will be affected.

CHAPTER 2 - ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPONENT'S PROPOSAL

2.1 This chapter includes discussion of the No Action Alternative, the Proponent's Proposal and alternatives to the Proponent's Proposal. Based on the initial scoping responses and preliminary identification of issues by Forest resource management specialists and other interested parties, Alternatives to the Proponent's Proposal have been formulated which address possible solutions to resource management conflicts. The availability of water and associated impacts to the fisheries of Howell Cr. have been the focus of these Alternatives.

Alternatives B and C fail to meet the directives of the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan or the provisions of the appended Inland Native Fish Strategy because they fail to protect fish habitat at a time/life stage critical to the maintenance of populations of brook trout. They are included in this analysis to display how either Alternative would effect the environment and how they differ from the actions and effects proposed in Alternatives A and D.

A more extensive range of alternative actions was considered in the course of preparing the Master Development Plan but was refined to the current Proponent's Proposal and subsequent Alternatives. Further discussion of this broader range of alternative actions and the rationale for eliminating them from further consideration is discussed in this chapter.

2.2.1 NO ACTION Alternative

The No Action Alternative is defined as the continuation of the currently authorized activities within the existing Special Use Permit area. This Alternative establishes the baseline conditions against which the potential impacts of the Proponent's Proposal can be assessed. The No Action Alternative does not assume that present resource conditions would remain constant over time. For some resources, the No Action Alternative reflects predictable future conditions but without the influence of the increased development related to the Proponent's Proposal.

2.2.2 PROPONENT'S PROPOSAL Alternative

The Proponent's Proposal consists of implementing the Proposed Master Development Plan, which includes the following: see fig. 1

NEW LODGE COMPLEX The new lodge complex would include construction of a new lodge building to house a skier learning center, day care, restaurant, equipment rental and sales area, Ski School offices, and Corporate office. Parking for the new lodge complex would be developed nearby and additional parking provided for snowmobile and bus traffic as well. The complex would be designed to provide year-round access for patrons of all abilities. New septic sewer facilities would be developed for this complex.

Adjacent to the new lodge would be teaching slopes for beginner skiers and snowboarders. The natural bowl shape of the terrain would require only minimal slope grooming to provide ideal teaching opportunity.

In the summer months, the lodge and parking area would serve hiker and mountain bike customers as well as small conferences, weddings, craft fairs, concerts, and catered private events.

The existing Pomerelle day lodge would be refurbished and continue to operate with restrooms, lunch areas, and warming facilities but with reduced or self-serve food services.

LIFTS AND TOWS The new lodge would be targeted at the beginner skier/snowboarder. To serve their needs, 2 surface tows and 1 chair lift would be added to provide access to the terrain from the new lodge area to the existing "Milk" run. Progressive increases in skier ability requirement would be achieved as one moves farther away from the new lodge area. As these tows are completed, the existing rope tow at the east of the existing lodge would be removed. Refer to Fig. 1 and 2 for detailed descriptions of the location and dimensions of each lift and tow.



Snowmaking Corridors and Summer Trails

- New Building Location
- New Roads, Parking
- New Mountain Bike Route
- New Snowmaking Corridor
- Snowmaking Reservoir
- Double Chair Lift
- Triple Chair Lift
- Handle Tow

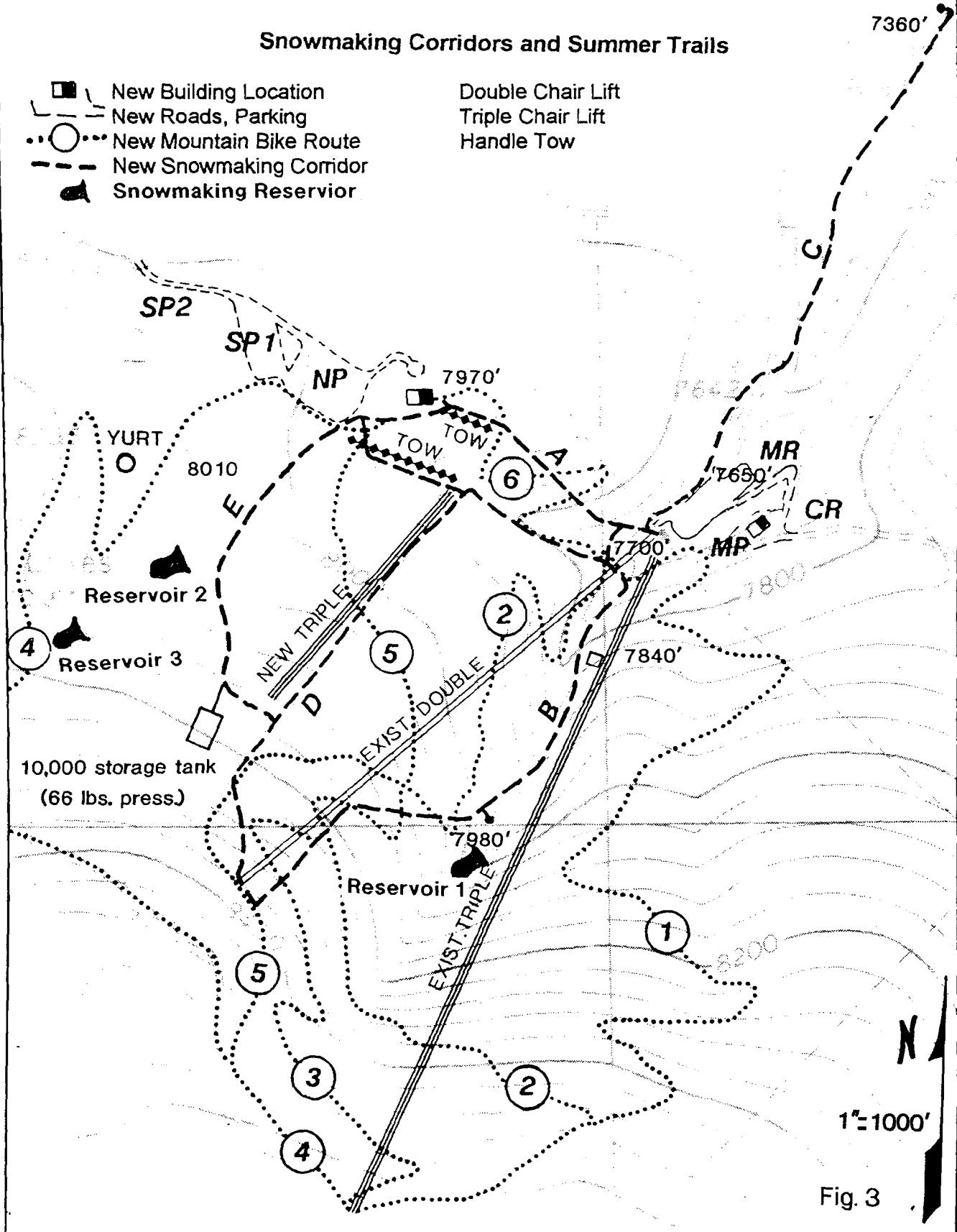


Fig. 3



Proposed Snowmaking Plan

Run Nbr.	NAME	Elevation from	Elevation to	Vert. ft.	Horiz. ft.	Slope	Width ft.	Net Acre
Triple Chair Lift								
2	Lower Spring Creek	7840	7720	120	1200	10%	80	2.2
13	Spring Creek	8080	7720	360	3780	10%	150	13.0
								Subtotal 1
								15.2
Double Chair Lift								
12	Bronc	8300	7990	310	1050	30%	80	1.9
14	Colt	8360	7720	640	3450	19%	65	5.1
16	Spud	8330	7720	610	3300	18%	60	4.5
16	Spud Cutoff	8180	7880	300	2000	15%	100	4.6
18	Milk Run	8475	7880	595	3270	18%	100	7.5
18	Milk Run Widening	8100	7900	200	1300	15%	80	2.4
22	Buttermilk	7880	7720	160	1200	13%	90	2.5
23	to be named	8260	7900	360	3120	12%	50	3.6
18	Gully	7863	7720	143	1050	14%	80	1.9
								Subtotal 2
								34.1
Proposed New Ski Trails								
25	Ski Terrain Park	8140	7900	240	1600	15%	150	5.5
26	Snowboard Park	8130	8100	30	250	12%	80	0.5
27	Graduate Tow	8000	7900	100	800	13%	300	5.5
28	Nursery Tow	7960	7930	30	350	9%	100	0.8
								Subtotal 3
								12.3
Total Coverage								60.1

Snowmaking water is proposed to be supplied primarily by Bennett Springs and will be supplemented by capturing surface run-off, which will be returned to a new snowmaking storage pond. Water from Bennett Spring will either be pumped to 8010 feet elevation to a proposed 2 acre-foot storage pond, or directly into the snowmaking system. Transmission of water between 7725' and 8010' will alternate between circuits A and B.

A new water supply pipeline, from Bennett Springs to the bottom of circuits A and B, will be required to provide sufficient water capacity to the new snowmaking system.

Table 5
Proposed Snowmaking Circuits

Lbl. <i>Circuit</i>	Elevation			Vert.	Horiz.	Width	Disturbed
	from	to	via	max ft.	ft.	ft.	Acres
A Buttermilk, Race Hill, Novice Tow	7725	8010		285	3100	10	0.7
B Spring Creek, Gully, Graduate Tow	7950	8010	7725	285	6100	10	1.4
C New Water Supply Line	7400	7725		325	9600	10	2.2
D Milk, loop via Colt to Spring Creek	7900	7950	8400	500	6000	10	1.4
E Reservoir to Yahoo	8010	8350		340	2300	10	0.5
				Totals	27100		6.2

Fig. 4

One of the noted conflicts which Pomerelle seeks to improve is that less experienced skiers and snowboard riders are currently mixed in with higher speed traffic of more experienced skiers and riders. Interference between these groups not only lessens the quality of the recreation experience for both groups but also poses a safety concern. Additionally, the inherent intimidation experienced by beginners can be lessened by offering them practice slopes where they don't compete with faster, more experienced skiers and riders.

SNOWMAKING With the anticipated increases in skier use, the snow in high traffic areas would require more frequent grooming and supplementation by artificial snowmaking. Additionally, ensuring an early season opening could be a marketable advantage for Pomerelle. Approximately 60 acres of ski runs are targeted to receive 100 acre feet of man-made snow, including: run confluences, lift loading areas, and teaching slopes.

A portion of the water for snowmaking is proposed to be pumped from the combination of the existing source in Bennett Spring and seasonal flow from Pomerelle Spring (Ski Area Sp.) to a 2 acre foot reservoir pond to be located southwest of the proposed new lodge. This water would supplement that which would be pumped directly from Bennett Spring to the snowmaking system. A total of 150 gallons per minute would be required while snow is being made for 55 days of the 75 day season from October 15 through December 31. Additional short production periods would occur as spot improvements in the snow cover are required.

Application of the snow would be by self-aerated nozzles which can be moved from hydrant to hydrant as needed. See fig. 3 and 4.

NEW RUNS AND MODIFICATION OF EXISTING RUNS In order to accommodate the higher levels of skier use and to provide a more pleasurable skiing product, the Proponent's Proposal includes creation of 4 new runs for 12.3 additional acres, and 35.6 acres of modification to existing runs. Modification includes removal of vegetation and may also include recontouring of the slope in certain locations. Generally, these recontoured areas would be accomplished by shallow surface re-grading. In the "Spring Creek" run is a gully, formed by seasonal snow melt and storm run-off. This intermittent water course would be filled with coarse rock to permit passage of water and covered with a substantial layer of earth to establish a new, more skiable terrain. Subsurface drainage regimes would be maintained. See fig. 5 and 6.



Pomerelle Ski Trail Inventory									Expansion					
Run Nbr.	NAME	Elevation		Vert.	Horiz.	Slope	Width	Exist.	ID	New	New			
		from	to	ft.	ft.		ft.	Acres	Nbr.	Width	Acres			
Triple Chair Lift														
1	Back Door	8220	7725	495	2700	18%	85	5.3	B4	90	3.5			
2	Lower Spring Creek	7840	7720	120	1200	10%	80	2.2						
3	Fence Line	8100	7720	380	2100	18%	20	1.0						
4	Bull Run	8640	8040	600	3750	16%	200	17.2						
4	Bull Return (Cottontail)	8000	7730	270	1700	16%								
5	Steer Return	7970	7750	220	1200	18%			B5	80	2.2			
6	Stampede	8040	7900	140	480	29%	100	1.1	B8	120	3.6			
7	Instructor	8655	7725	930	4680	20%	120	12.9						
8	Lift line	8655	7725	930	4200	22%	60	5.8						
9	Chute#9	8500	8120	380	1200	32%	50	1.4						
9	Chute-9 Glading	8640	8200	440	1300	34%								
10	Meadow	8655	8480	175	1080	16%	90	2.2	B9	130	2.5			
11	Punch Bowl	8440	8220	220	720	31%	300	5.0						
11	Punch Bowl Face	8250	8000	250	850	29%								
12	Bronc (night skiing)	8300	7990	310	1050	30%	80	1.9						
13	Spring Creek	8080	7720	360	3780	10%	180	15.6						
20	Cat Track/Giddy Up	8655	8330	325	2700	12%	140	8.7	B6	250	3.4			
21	Twin Lakes	8460	8060	400	3600	11%	80	6.6						
29	Triple Crossing	8080	7900	180	600	30%								
30	Lower Spring Creek **	7900	7750	150	1200	13%								
31	East Bench	8640	8600	40	400	10%								
31	New Run (upper)	8600	8000	600	2400	25%			B7	150	4.1			
31	New Run (lower) *	7830	7720	110	300	37%			B1	20	0.2			
									B2	140	7.7			
									B3	120	0.8			
Double Chair Lift														
					Subtotal 1			86.8			28.1			
14	Colt (night skiing)	8360	7720	640	3450	19%	65	5.1	A6	150	6.9			
15	Six Shooter	8330	7800	530	3400	16%	30	2.3						
16	Spud (night skiing)	8330	7720	610	3300	18%	60	4.5						
16	Spud Cutoff (night skiing)	8180	7880	300	2000	15%								
17	Ponderosa	8060	7880	180	1000	18%	100	2.3						
18	Milk Run (night skiing)	8475	7880	595	3270	18%	140	10.5	A5	80	2.4			
18	Milk Run Widening ***	8100	7900	200	1300	15%								
18	Gully	7863	7720	143	1050	14%	80	1.9						
19	Yahoo	8220	8075	145	1140	13%	135	3.5						
22	Buttermilk	7880	7720	160	1200	13%	90	2.5						
23	to be named	8260	7900	360	3120	12%	150	10.7	A1	150	5.5			
24	to be named	8080	7880	200	1450	14%	130	4.3						
-	Rope Tow	7785	7730	55	780	7%	100	1.8						
					Subtotal 2			49.6						7.5
Proposed New Ski Trails									Existing Total		136.5		35.6	
25	Ski Terrain Park	8140	7900	240	1600	15%			A1	150	5.5			
26	Snowboard Park	8130	8100	30	250	12%								
27	Graduate Tow	8000	7900	100	800	13%								
28	Nursery Tow	7960	7930	30	350	9%								
									Subtotal				12.3	
Expanded Area Total												47.9		

* Remove existing ticket office building and trailer, raise old tow runoff.

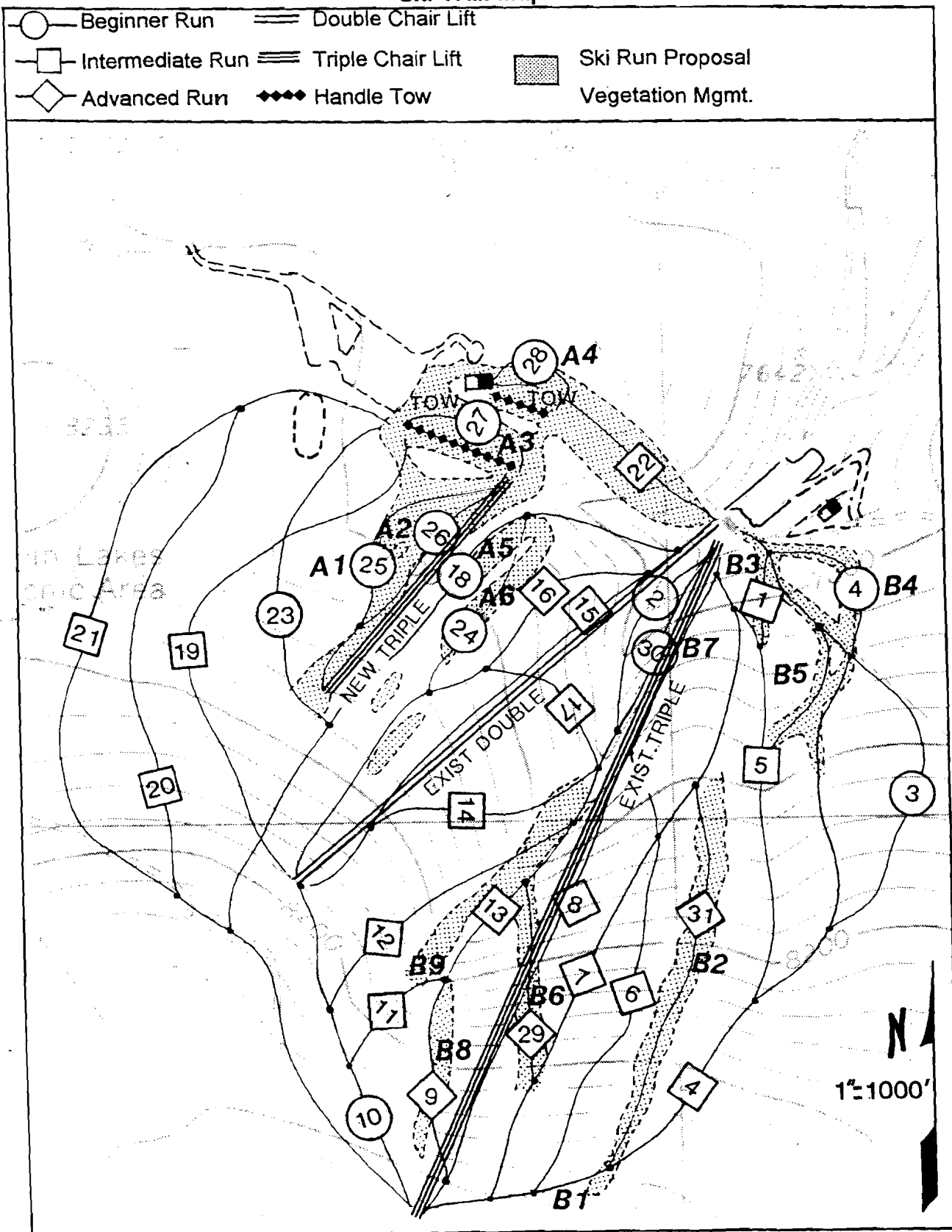
** At skiers' right of Reservoir, grade new entry re-contour between trees, left of Triple chair lift.

*** Milk Run widening above Half Pipe and re-contour the existing Half Pipe.

Fig. 5



Ski Trail Map



CONSTRUCT NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL SYSTEM A system of single-track trails for use by non-motorized activities would be constructed within the boundary of the ski area. Connection to other National Forest system trails is possible. Use of the ski lifts in conjunction with these trails is anticipated. See fig. 3.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT Large timber vegetation is an important element for the capture and holding of the generous snow deposits at Pomerelle. Maintaining the snow gathering and holding capability of the permit area is much like maintaining other infrastructure - it must be taken care of. The existing stands are declining. Disease and insect attack are killing many older trees and other pathogens hosted by these dying trees are infecting and stunting the younger, smaller trees. Removal of small patches of affected trees and general sanitation of the stands has been approved in a previous analysis (1992, Howell Canyon Forest Health and Ecosystem Management Project). The specific locations of timber to be removed can be determined in coordination with the ski area to its best advantage. As runs are modified, as described above, certain areas would be returned to non-skiable acres. Regeneration of new trees can generally be assured by natural means. Hand planting would rarely be necessary. In some stands, the natural aspen component is being suppressed. As the stand is thinned, more aspen may become evident.

EXPAND NIGHT LIGHTING To meet the needs of an expanding customer base, night skiing operations would be expanded. Additional acres of ski runs would be lighted. See fig. 1.

EXISTING BASE AREA Several changes in the existing base area would be targeted at relieving congestion of skiers returning to the lifts and providing a more "front door" appearance rather than the high visibility of maintenance facilities and kitchen entries. Specific actions would include relocation of the existing maintenance building and fueling facility to a site between the existing parking lot and existing Conner Flat road with a new approach from the east end of the existing parking lot, removal of the existing rope tow, and removal of the existing ticket office.

WATER SOURCES, PERMITS AND USES The proposed combination of water uses requires new permitting from the State of Idaho Department of Water Resources. In the past, the combination of waters from Pomerelle Spring and Bennett Spring have been used without differentiation of purpose, i.e., culinary vs. snowmaking or other. With the proposed increases in water use new Permits will be required. This Alternative proposes water uses in addition to the existing culinary water use (approx. 7200 gal. per day during ski season) and the summer diversion of waters from Pomerelle Sp. It also differs from the existing situation in that water now returned to Howell Cr. as excess to the present tank capacity may be stored for snowmaking.

Because of potential conflicts between drawing additional water from the Bennett Spring source and the need to maintain adequate spawning habitat for fisheries in Howell Cr. during the fall of the year, additional Alternatives have been formulated to examine different possibilities and outcomes.

2.2.3 REDUCED SNOWMAKING Alternative

Because of potential impacts from withdrawing substantially more water from Bennett Spring than the current 18 to 20 gal/minute, an Alternative limited to a reduced water quantity has been analyzed. All provisions of the PROPONENT'S PROPOSAL ALTERNATIVE would remain the same except:

SNOWMAKING SYSTEM The quantity of water drawn from Bennett Spring would be limited to 60 gal/min.(total) during the period from approximately October 15 to approximately December 31 each year. This in combination with approximately 10 gal/min. from Pomerelle Spring would provide approximately 500,000 gals. to be stored in one or more of three reservoirs. Locations of the reservoir sites are described on the attached map, fig.3. The reservoirs would not exceed 1 acre in surface area nor 10 feet in depth. The reservoirs would typically be filled from spring runoff in approximately 10 days. Once filled additional runoff would pass through the reservoirs. The quantity of water pumped from Bennett Spring during other times of the year would be limited to the existing rate of 18 to 20 gal/min. This Alternative would produce approximately 39 acre feet of snow.

2.2.4 FOREST SERVICE PROPOSED ACTION Alternative

As an alternative which could be maintained within the current system of continuous year-round pumping from Bennett Spring, this Alternative would propose all elements of the PROPONENT'S PROPOSAL ALTERNATIVE with the exception:

SNOWMAKING SYSTEM In this Alternative, the pumping rate would remain at 18-20 gal/min. from Bennett Spring, year-round, plus approximately 10 gal/min from Pomerelle Spring, during the winter season. To supply the snowmaking demand, reservoirs totalling 5,300,000 gal. (16.3 ac-ft) would be located at sites #1 through #3 - see fig. 3. The surface area of each reservoir would not exceed 5 acres and the average depth would not exceed 10 feet. The reservoirs would likely be filled by spring snowmelt, but might be maintained by pumping from Bennett Spring or by the approximately 10 gal/min. flow from Pomerelle Spring. Reservoirs would likely fill in 45 days or less. Once filled, additional runoff would pass through the reservoirs. Snowmaking would take place for an average of 55 days of the 75 day period from October 15 through December 31. During this period, a maximum of 18-20 gals/min. would be pumped continuously from Bennett Spring, to be used in

addition to the stored water. This Alternative would produce approximately 39 acre-feet of snow. At the end of the snowmaking period the reservoirs would be reduced to the minimum reserve level.

2.2.5 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD

In the course of developing the Proponent's Proposal, the Plan has examined alternative solutions for various needs. The following items have been considered but abandoned in favor of those now included in the Master Development Plan:

Expansion of facilities into the Bennett Springs area Early consideration was given to locating new facilities in the Bennett Springs area. Additional advanced skier terrain was thought to be a desired product. After consideration of the difficulties associated with developing in probable wetlands environments, alignment with the appropriate market segment and economic analysis of development costs vs. revenue generating capabilities the alternative was dropped from further consideration.

Expansion with connection to the Inventoried development area in Marsh Cr. Terrain opportunities in the Marsh Cr. drainage have been identified as being capable of offering near world class resort potential, however, such a resort venture would require many aspects of local infrastructure, political climate, and market availability to be well understood and a correct development planned. The idea continues to be of local interest but is not thought to be ripe for implementation at this time.

Other Water Sources Other potential water sources such as wells or transport from distant locations were thought to be unlikely to provide adequate amounts of water, were potentially in conflict with the same resources in Howell Cr. or other similar drainages, or were economically not feasible and were dropped from further consideration.

Other Rates of Pumping Other rates of pumping from Howell Cr. were considered but found to be adequately similar to the Reduced Snowmaking Alternative and were discontinued from further evaluation. Between the extremes demonstrated by the REDUCED PUMPING ALTERNATIVE and the FOREST SERVICE PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE it is possible to calculate an offset of pumping versus storage to allow snowmaking of similar quantity. If a minimum in-stream flow is eventually determined for Howell Cr. which provides available excess water during snowmaking season, it would be possible to propose a new pumping vs storage ratio and therefore an additional Alternative. However, since current data does not accommodate any specific determinations of in-stream needs beyond the theoretical needs examined by these previous Alternatives, no further analysis is possible at this time.

CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The description of the Affected Environment includes discussion of various components of the physical and biological environment. In some instances the discussion may involve inter-relationships between components of the environment. Discussions of the effects of the Proponent's Proposal and other Alternatives are included in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences.

3.1 Vegetation

3.1.1 Timber Resource

The forested vegetation within the Pomerelle Ski Area is comprised of subalpine fir, lodgepole, and aspen, with minor amounts of Douglas-fir and Engelmann spruce.

Within the permit area, the subalpine fir is the predominate tree species and occurs on primarily north to northeast facing aspects. Additional pockets of pure lodgepole pine and minor amounts of Douglas-fir and Engelmann spruce occur. Most of the aspen component (90%) is in a downward trend and is being encroached upon by conifers on most sites.

<u>Cover Types</u>	<u>Acres</u>		
Lodgepole Pine	16 acres	Total (3%)	Forested (5%)
20Mixed Conifer (Alpine fir, Lodgepole pine)	243 acres	(47%)	(80%)
Aspen	10 acres	(2%)	(3%)
Aspen/conifer	36 acres	(7%)	(12%)
SUBTOTAL	305 ACRES		
Non-forest	216 acres	(41%)	
TOTAL	521 acres		

The primary vegetative structure within the permit area is mature or over-mature forest cover making up 85% of the area.

Current conditions are such that stands are overstocked, species diversity is lacking, and ladder and down fuels are excessive. The forested landscape is experiencing different stages of tree mortality, depending on stand composition, density, and maturity. Many of the forested stands within Howell Canyon on the Albion Division of the Burley Ranger District are experiencing insect and disease infestations at levels well above those found in healthier forests.

Lack of activity, both through fire and thinning, has created these stand conditions which are susceptible to increased attack by insects, disease and catastrophic wildfire.

Forest vegetation in the area is being affected by several insect and disease agents including, but not limited to, mountain pine beetle, dwarf mistletoe, yellow witches broom, and annosus root rot. Biological agents such as root and foliage diseases, dwarf mistletoes, and defoliating insects are stress agents that may be associated with the bark beetle attack.

Mountain pine beetle (MPB) activity is occurring within and adjacent to the ski area. This activity has been present since the early 1970's to present. A 1995 insect detection survey has indicated low amounts of MPB within the permit area and increasing amounts adjacent to the area.

During August 1996, an on-site survey by Forest Health Protection Personnel indicated low level of insect activity within the ski area, but three notable forest diseases are present and of widespread occurrence. About 75% of the lodgepole pine are infected with dwarf mistletoe and 95% of the subalpine fir has fir broom rust and is displaying evidence of annosus root rot. Trees will continue to windthrow as the disease weakens the root systems of the mature to over-mature trees. The best method to reduce this occurrence is to maintain younger stands with smaller average diameters.

Other potential pests include Western Spruce Budworm, Western Balsam Bark Beetle, and Douglas-fir Tussock Moth. All of these agents are directly proportional to stand age, diameter, and in the case of bark beetle, the amount of root disease present.

Aspen

A stand of aspen occurs in the northern part of the ski area north of the Day Lodge. Following Mueggler's (1988) classification of aspen in the Intermountain Region, this stand represents the aspen/mountain snowberry/tall forb (*Populus tremuloides*/Symphoricarpos oreophilus/tall forb) community type. The stand is characterized by a nearly pure aspen, with a sparse shrub layer of mountain snowberry. Few other shrubs are present. A diversity of tall forbs occur beneath the shrubs, including groundsel (*Senecio serra*), horse-mint (*Agastache urticifolia*), and monkshood (*Aconitum columbianum*). Additional, small, usually stunted stands of aspen occur elsewhere in the project area and are too small to map individually. Usually they are on the edge of coniferous forest stands. They appear to also be the aspen/mountain snowberry/tall forb community type.

3.1.2 Non-Forest Vegetation

The three major types of non-forest vegetation at Pomerelle are arranged ecologically along a topographic/snow deposition gradient. At one extreme, the low sagebrush (*Artemisia arbuscula*) community inhabits windswept ridges where little snow accumulates, while at the other extreme, the snowbed community occurs in the lee of these ridges and has heavy snow accumulations. Mountain big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *vaseyana*) vegetation occupies an intermediate position along this gradient. These communities and their environmental relationships are discussed in

greater detail below. A short discussion of vegetation around Pomerelle Spring appears at the end of this section. Portions of the existing runs were formerly included in timbered communities but are now maintained as non-forest types due to ski area management activities.

Low Sagebrush

Low sagebrush-dominated vegetation fits into the low sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass (*Artemisia arbuscula*/*Agropyron spicatum*) habitat type described by Hironaka et al. (1983) from southern Idaho and Nelson and Jensen (1987) from northern Nevada. The northern Nevada classification better describes the community at Pomerelle, because of similarities in geology and elevation. The southern Idaho classification only describes stands at low elevation occurring on volcanic substrates, while the Nevada type occurs on quartzite at higher elevations. Low sagebrush and green rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*) are the only shrubs commonly found in this habitat.

This sparsely vegetated community occurs on ridgelines and knolls that are exposed to high winds throughout the year. The community has low snow cover in the winter and is the driest of any habitat at Pomerelle in the summer due to wind desiccation.

Only one small area of low sagebrush was mapped in the project area, on a small knoll northwest of the Day Lodge. Two large stands occur just outside of the area, one along the western edge near Twin Lakes Picnic Area and the other is on the ridgeline above the Triple Chair terminus. The latter site is inhabited by the rare barrel cactus.

Mountain Big Sagebrush

Two communities are dominated by mountain big sagebrush at Pomerelle. The one that covers the largest area is the mountain big sagebrush/mountain snowberry/mountain brome (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *vaseyana*/*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*/*Bromus carinatus*) habitat type described by Nelson and Jensen (1987). Mountain big sagebrush and mountain snowberry have high cover in all stands, except for those areas where the shrubs were removed from ski runs. Grasses dominate the understory, especially mountain brome, but also western needlegrass (*Stipa occidentalis*) and bearded wheatgrass (*Agropyron trachycaulum*). Forbs are also common in the understory. This habitat type occurs on gentle slopes around the periphery of the ski area in intermediate topographic positions between the low sagebrush on the ridges and snowbeds in their lee.

The mountain big sagebrush/Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) habitat type (Hironaka et al. 1983; Nelson and Jensen 1987) covers a much smaller area. It occurs in the low pass east of Twin Lakes Picnic Area and, to a lesser extent, mixed with the mountain big sagebrush/mountain snowberry/mountain brome habitat type adjacent to the Ridge ski run along the southwestern edge of the ski area. This habitat type is more common at higher elevations on the summit of Mount Harrison (Moseley 1996). This type probably indicates higher snow loading than the previous type, but not so heavy as to

preclude sagebrush establishment and survival. Mountain big sagebrush has high cover in all stands, except where the shrubs were removed for ski runs.

Most of the mountain big sagebrush stands have very high shrub cover, limiting access by cattle for grazing. Snow making in mountain big sagebrush stands could increase the snowpack enough to preclude sagebrush and grass survival, eventually converting them to the snowbed community. This could lead to increased erosion rates (see discussion below).

Snowbed Community

The snowbed community was described from the summit of Mount Harrison by Moseley (1993; 1996) where it comprises part of the habitat for Christ's paintbrush. It is characterized by the lack of sagebrush and the dominance of forb species, especially lupine (*Lupinus argenteus*), fleabane (*Erigeron peregrinus*), goldenrod (*Solidago multiradiata*), creeping sibbaldia (*Sibbaldia procumbens*), and penstemon (*Penstemon rydbergii*). Grass cover is minimal.

This community occurs in the lee of ridges and indicates areas of high snow deposition caused largely by wind transfer from slopes exposed to the prevailing wind. It also occurs in the openings of the upper-elevation tree islands. The snow pack in this community lasts longer into the spring and early summer than surrounding vegetation, creating a short growing season that precludes tree and sagebrush establishment. Areas with the greatest snow deposition are indicated by the presence of creeping sibbaldia. Pocket gopher activity is high in snowbed communities resulting in considerable exposed, churned soil. Along with the pocket gopher digging, high meltwater runoff and the relatively steep slopes all contribute to the naturally high erosion potential in this community. Cattle trampling and possibly ski run maintenance represent the human activities that exacerbate the already high erosion rates.

Four areas of snowbed were mapped at Pomerelle. A small snowbed occurs north of the Day Lodge parking lot, above the turnoff to Mount Harrison. The remaining areas occur in the lee of the main ridge that forms the western boundary of the permit area. Two of the larger areas include the Punch Bowl run, between the Triple Chair and Double Chair, and lee of Point 8235, in the center of the Special Use Permit Expansion area. Tree islands containing snowbed glades were mapped at the upper elevations of the ski area.

Pomerelle Spring

The small areas of seepy ground around the spring, where water is near the soil surface, are dominated by false-hellebore (*Veratrum californicum*) on the east-facing slope, and a dense stand of mountain gooseberry (*Ribes montigenum*) on the west-facing slope. Species dominant along the spring channel are brook saxifrage (*Saxifraga arguta*) and monkeyflower (*Mimulus* sp., possibly *M. lewisii*). The entire area is heavily trampled and denuded by cattle.

3.1.3 Grazing Management

Livestock on the Albion Allotment graze from 6/11 to 9/30 with 471 head of livestock split between five permittees. Cattle graze using a season-long grazing system and each permittee places his cattle in separate areas within the allotment. They begin the grazing season in those areas but end the season mixed at the upper elevations of the allotment. Pomerelle Ski Area is within the Albion Allotment and provides approximately 3 % of the grazing capacity of the allotment.

Currently the operations at Pomerelle are winter oriented and therefore the interaction of livestock with Pomerelle users is limited or non-existent. Range improvements such as fences and water developments are seldom an issue because of the annual coverage of snow, however, some conflicts around the lodge area are noted during the summer months.

3.1.4 Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Plants

The Albion Mountains harbor two plant species found nowhere else in the world: Christ's paintbrush (*Castilleja christii*) and Davis wavewing (*Cymopterus davisii*). Christ's paintbrush occurs in only one population found on the summit ridges of Mount Harrison, 1.5 miles west of the Pomerelle Ski Area. Davis wavewing is also known from the summit of Mount Harrison, as well as two other populations near the southern end of the Albion Mountains. Both species occur in stands of sagebrush and other non-forest vegetation types, generally where deep snow accumulates as a result of wind transfer from exposed areas. Christ's paintbrush is a federal candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Both species are Region 4 Forest Service Sensitive Species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Sawtooth National Forest signed a Conservation Agreement in 1995 that outlines responsibilities for the conservation of the single population of Christ's paintbrush.

Extensive inventories were completed for these two species in the Albion Mountains during 1993, including potential habitat in the vicinity of Pomerelle Ski Area (Moseley 1993). Intensive inventories of potential habitat took place at Pomerelle during August 1996. No populations of the two species were found at the ski area.

In 1996, the site was also inventoried for presence of Ute Ladies tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*). No occurrences of the plant were observed nor were representative habitat sites. It is unlikely that this plant would be found at Pomerelle Ski Area.

A rare barrel cactus (*Pediocactus simpsonii*) occurs on the summit of Point 8762, above the upper terminus of the Triple Chair. This small cactus occurs on the windswept ridgeline in low sagebrush habitat. This population is just outside the special use permit boundary and appears to be undisturbed. While this cactus is widely distributed in the western United States, it is rare in Idaho. The Idaho Native Plant Society places it on their Monitor list of rare plants in the state. The Monitor list includes species that are

common within a limited range, as well as species which are uncommon, but have no identifiable threats. Of special note, these barrel cactus populations at Pomerelle are the highest elevation known for any cactus species in Idaho.

No noxious weeds were observed during the survey.

3.2 Wildlife

3.2.1 Terrestrial Animals

Forested wildlife habitats are changing through plant succession that is being altered by fire suppression and management activities. Plant succession has been altered because of fire suppression activities during the past 70 or more years. By stopping fires, shade tolerant plant species replace shade intolerant species. An example of this within the project area is lodgepole pine areas are being replaced by subalpine fir due to fire suppression actions. The same thing is occurring within the aspen types. Aspen is being replaced by subalpine fir. Stand density (the number of trees per area) of forest types has increased because fire is not allowed to kill some trees and decrease the density of live trees that remain after fire. Because of fire suppression, habitats that are present today are different than habitats that occurred 70 years ago.

General wildlife species include all mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians that are likely to occur in the project area and that are not classified as threatened, endangered, sensitive, or management indicator species. The project area is typified by fragmented cover with closed canopies, thick understory, and extensive edge habitat due to ski run maintenance practices. Species suited to this type of disturbed environment are common in the project area. Few extensive unfragmented blocks of forest occur within the proposed project area. The Howell Canyon drainage includes the most overall forested wildlife habitat in the project area. It is also a travel corridor for wildlife species moving into and out of the project area.

Mammals that may inhabit the project area include raccoon, porcupine, skunk, coyote, red fox, snowshoe hare, and several species of squirrel, bats, mice, voles, and rats. When the habitat is more isolated and unfragmented, species that may occur include mule deer and weasel species.

The project area is within an established bird migration route, due to the prominent landscape. Several species of raptors have been identified in the vicinity of the project area. These include, ferruginous hawk, Swainson's hawk, American kestrel, red-tailed hawk, turkey vulture, Cooper's hawk and sharp-shinned hawk. The diversity of vegetation types found within the project area provides nesting, foraging, and roosting habitat for perching bird (passerine) species. Passerines observed in the vicinity include common flicker, black-billed magpie, American robin, common crow, scrub jay, dark-eyed junco, and common flicker.

Reptiles are likely to occur in all habitats, but are most likely limited by the high elevation of the project area. Species that may occur are western skink, racer, western rattlesnake, western terrestrial garter snake, rubber boa, and western fence lizard. Habitat for amphibians is limited due to the lack of ponded water areas, riparian stream habitat and the high elevation within the proposed project area.

3.2.2 Management Indicator Species

Forest Service Management Indicator Species that are present are mule deer and possibly Brewer's sparrow. The majority of the project area provides habitat for mule deer. Human-related disturbance and the lack of large blocks of dense protective cover reduce the habitat quality for this species. Mule deer occur in the project area during all seasons except winter. They are particularly active during the summer fawning period. The Howell Canyon drainage provides quality habitat for mule deer.

The presence of Brewer's sparrow is most likely limited by the small amount of sage/grass community habitat present within the project area. Although there is over 200 acres of non-forest communities, most of this area is cleared forest that is maintained as grass ski runs. The sage/grass community habitat amounts to approximately 50 acres within the project area.

3.2.3 Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

Bald eagles (threatened), peregrine falcons (endangered) and gray wolf (endangered) do not occur in the project area due to the absence of habitat. Several Forest Service sensitive species may inhabit the project area for part or all of the year. These species include the spotted bat, western big-eared bat, flammulated owl, northern goshawk, boreal owl. No known nests for northern goshawks or flammulated owls occur in the project area.

3.3 Fisheries

Pomerelle Ski Area lies within the headlands of Howell Cr. Although the proposal does not intend to make direct changes in the stream course, actions such as pumping water from Bennett Spring to the ski area would have potential effects on the stream. Discussions of the stream and its inherent resources are therefore relevant. Specific management requirements which might be important to this discussion include:

"Ensure in-stream flow requirements necessary to maintain fish and wildlife values." (FLRMP, Chap. IV, Pg. 62.)

"Determine in-stream flow requirements to maintain fish habitat." (FLRMP, Chap IV, Pg. 68.)

"Project plans will incorporate considerations for fish and wildlife habitat, and protection of aquatic environment." (FLRMP, Ch. IV, Pg. 112.)

"State wildlife agencies' population goals will be achieved when possible through maintaining and improving aquatic habitats." (FLRMP, Ch. IV. Pg. 74) [Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game emphasizes opportunities for catching brook trout at a success rate of at least 1 fish per hour. Their management plan calls for cooperative effort with the Forest Service to protect habitat. IDFG Mg't Plan pg. 215.]

"Maintain...(3) in-stream flows to support healthy riparian and aquatic habitats, the stability and effective function of stream channels, and the ability to route flood discharges;..." (INFISH, Riparian Goals, pg. A-1)

"Actions that reduce habitat quality, whether existing conditions are better or worse than objective values, would be inconsistent with the purpose of this interim direction." (INFISH, Riparian Management Objectives. pg. A-3.)

Based on past discussion with Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game, Yellowstone cutthroat, probably historically, and brook trout inhabit this stream as do many less notable species such as shiners, dace, and various sculpin. However, in recent stream surveys the Department has not observed any cutthroat. Brook trout spawn in Howell Cr. in the fall. Fish flow curves for each life cycle of both Yellowstone cutthroat and brook trout and a stream hydrological curve were developed by Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Both sets of curves were compared with one another and show similar fisheries situations. Flows in Howell Cr. become crucially low during the fall months prior to initiation of winter precipitation. The stream hydrograph estimates these flows to be as low as 1.5 to 1.7 cubic feet per second (CFS). These discharges provide only 22 to 27 percent of optimum wetted usable habitat during these months. Maintaining these flows for extended periods of time, or further reducing them by diversion, could be detrimental to the fish populations of this stream.

3.3.1 Threatened or Endangered Animals

No threatened or endangered fish species are known to inhabit Howell Cr.

3.4 Hydrology

Average annual precipitation (30-year average) is 38 inches at the Howell Canyon snotel site, maintained by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service at an elevation of 7980 feet, near the ski area. The five months of November through March account for 24.3 inches, or 64% of that total and would essentially all be snow. Snowpack on April 15 averages 23.6 inches of water equivalent, a large amount compared to other ski areas in southern Idaho.

Howell Canyon and the current water supply for the ski area, Bennett Spring, is directly tributary to Howell Creek. Howell Creek at the National Forest boundary has a watershed of 5.36 square miles and an estimated average annual flow of 5.2 cfs, based on comparison with a long-term gauge on Cassia Creek. This extrapolation indicates that the low flow season is August through December, with average monthly flows

ranging from 1.5 in September to between 1.7 and 1.8 cfs in October through December. Drought years would be less.

The ski area is in fairly good watershed condition though there are some site-specific problems that affect water quality. The chief problem is erosion from the parking lot and disposal of snow from snow plowing of the parking lot, into the drainage at the downstream end of the parking lot. The plowed snow includes a fair amount of the parking lot surfacing (mostly fine gravel) and trash that is carried in the melt waters, including the main drainage culvert that carries the spring and storm flows from the upper drainage around the lodge and under the parking lot.

Snow can be disposed of at a site with sufficient filter to remove this detrimental material (provided the melt water can drain without forming a gully), or a sediment basin can be constructed on site, that can be cleaned out as needed. The existing culvert may need to be extended further downstream for this purpose.

Continued care is needed on the upper slopes of the ski area to ensure that drainage is maintained to prevent gully formation, particularly on access roads, and to ensure that vegetation is maintained, with any grazing impacts. The Idaho Division of Environmental Quality is monitoring Howell Creek in 1997 to determine if water quality has been limited by activities in the watershed. The primary activities that may impact water quality are road construction (particularly the reconstruction and surfacing of the main road but also that associated with timber harvest), the ski area, timber harvest, other recreation, and grazing.

Snowmaking has been done in the past at the ski area using the existing culinary water system with a potential of .06 cfs (18 to 20 gallons per minute from Bennett Spring and 10 gpm from Pomerelle Spring). However, no water right has been obtained for this use, and snowmaking has been discontinued until a permit for the water use is obtained from the Idaho Department of Water Resources.

The project area contains no wetlands that would be impacted by the proposal. Bennett Spring and other springs nearby along Howell Creek are surrounded by small areas of wetlands. Either the construction or expansion of the intake structure at the spring or the filling of the intermittent channel (use of a French drain) above the cattle trough to facilitate recontouring, may involve a discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. Under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) a U.S. Department of the Army permit is required for the discharges of dredged and fill material into the waters of the United States.

3.5 Soils

The soil survey completed in 1981 (Gilman), indicated that the proposed development area occurs in Landtype 443-2C. This landtype indicates the project would be developed on a sedimentary bedrock material, a weakly dissect slope, high elevation and generally in conifers. The project area occurs on a stable, 4 to 6 percent slope with an

easterly aspect. Bedrock is exposed in the area of the proposed lodge but would not be a construction problem. Test pits at the proposed lodge and drainfield sites indicate that soil conditions should not present unusual conflicts for development. Typical drainage and compaction techniques would be sufficient.

The estimated soil classification in the site of the proposed new lodge is loamy skeletal mixed Argic Cryoborolls. The A horizon, surface layer is 7 inches thick, with a 10YR 2/2, very dark brown color and has a loamy texture. The Bt1 horizon is 7 inches thick, with a 10YR 3/2, very dark grayish brown color and has a loamy texture. The increase in percentage of clay in this layer will qualify for an argillic horizon. This finer textured layer reduces the rate for the downward movement of water and influences the root penetration of the vegetation. The Bt2 horizon is 8 inches thick, with a 10YR 3/3, dark brown color and has a loamy texture. The C1 horizon is 11 inches thick, with a 10YR 5/4, yellowish brown color, and has a silty clay loamy texture. The rock fragments in this layer is estimated to be 50 percent by volume. The C2 horizon is 15 inches thick, with a 10YR 5/6, yellowish brown color, and has a silt loamy texture. The rock fragments in this layer is estimated to be 85 percent by volume. The rock fragments in the two C horizons are flat surfaced with irregular shapes. The sizes are variable. Water accumulation is not evident in the soil profile. The A and B horizons would be suitable for topsoil and landscaping needs. The soil in the two C horizons would be suitable for fill in the foundation of the lodge. This material should be covered with gravel and compacted before the foundation is poured. Several pits were examined and determined to be of relatively similar characteristics with only minor variations in clay content.

3.6 Heritage

Native American Treaty Rights

The Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868 secured and guaranteed in perpetuity, the continuation of hunting, fishing and gathering rights to members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation of Idaho. These rights extend to off-Reservation "unoccupied federally owned lands" which include lands administered by the Sawtooth National Forest, including Pomerelle Ski Area and surrounding lands.

The Shoshone Bannock Tribes have been consulted through public scoping regarding the proposed actions. It is anticipated that the proposed actions will have no direct impact as tribal treaty rights are not affected. Shoshone-Bannock Tribal treaty rights guaranteed by the Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868 remain in effect regardless of the alternative selected.

Although Native American cultural sites have been recorded in the general vicinity, a heritage resources inventory did not identify any new sites in the project area. At the suggestion of tribal members, additional consultation will be undertaken should any Traditional Cultural Properties be identified.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, a comprehensive cultural resources inventory of the project area was completed in July 1996. One historic isolate, a rock cairn, was recorded and is believed to be associated with an historic survey or sheepherding activities. No sites have been identified that are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer reviewed the report and concurred that there would be no effect to any eligible heritage resources.

3.7 Recreation

The Pomerelle Ski Area is located in Howell Canyon, a "roaded-rural" setting as described by the Forest Service Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). This setting is characterized by substantial modifications to the natural environment where the presence of human use and activity is apparent.

The recreational travel management established by the Forest Service encourages passenger car use on designated roads, accepts motorized vehicle use on routes or trails designated for such use, and discourages trail bikes and mt. bikes off of designated routes. Mountain biking, pack and saddle stock use, cross country skiing, and hiking/backpacking, are typical activities.

Howell Canyon Recreation Complex contains five developed campgrounds and trailheads, Pomerelle ski area, Howell snowmobile area, summerhomes and dispersed recreation opportunities. Until 1996 use figures indicate between 100,000 and 150,000 visitors per year. Pomerelle accounts for approx. 60,000 of those visits. 1997 brings with it the paving of the Howell Canyon Road, and with that an anticipated increase of visitors.(perhaps totaling as many as 225,000+)

As the population of the Burley/Rupert area continues to grow the canyon will experience increased pressures from forest users desiring a place to engage in a variety of activities. Increased user conflicts and potential impacts to natural resources may occur.

3.8 Scenery

Pomerelle Ski Area is located in the upper portion of Howell Canyon in a protected basin with NE aspect. The landscape character of the area is described as open ridges with sparse, low growing vegetation with included basins of mixed conifer forests and less frequent stands of aspen. Dense forest covers are often interrupted by grassy meadows and lush riparian vegetation along drainages. Pomerelle Ski Area takes advantage of this contrasting ecological situation to provide most of its skier terrain and has limited the amount of clearing to only a few specific runs.

The visual resource inventory, conducted as a part of the Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (FLRMP), includes most of the existing permitted area in a zone described as Mg1B/PR. The area is viewed at middleground distance (1/2 to 3 mi.), is included in the most sensitive category of viewer interest

levels, offers the viewer scenes typical of the mountainous areas of Southern Idaho and is recommended to have management activities which meet a Visual Quality Objective (VQO) of Partial Retention - activities may be visible in the landscape but should not dominate it and should borrow their characteristics from the naturally established landscape.

The current base area and most of the proposed expansion area are included in an inventoried area described as Fg1B/R [foreground, sensitivity level 1, typical variety class / with a Visual Quality Objective (VQO) of Retention] management activities should not be evident to the casual forest visitor.

The primary views of the ski area are from selected viewer positions in Howell Canyon, the less frequently visited knoll of Conner Ridge and an electronics site on the ridge east of Thompson Flat Campground. Large portions of the ski area are only viewed from within the ski area itself. The lights from the night skiing operation can be observed from Interstate Highway I-86 between Raft River and the junction with Interstate I-84.

In prescribing Standards and Guides, the Forest Plan (FLRMP) provided that activities should attempt to meet the VQO's as completely as would be allowable given the needs of the ski area development. Development alternatives should be considered which emphasize the natural appearance of the landscape and which avoid introducing straight lines and un-natural appearances.

Most of the clearings created for lifts and runs were completed in the earlier years of the ski area and as such did not make much attempt to reduce the impact of straight edges. The lift line of chair lift #1 and the "Instructor" run are typical examples of obvious clearings in dense conifer settings. Conversely, the more recent developments of chair lift #2 and runs like "Colt" have taken advantage of the existing natural openings and have made use of the varied edge to create less obvious openings in the canopy of mixed vegetation.

Although the existing lodge and parking lot are located in the Retention VQO area they do not meet the criteria of being "not evident" nor has any attempt been made to screen them from public view. However, the visibility of these developments is limited to views available to only patrons of the ski area or for brief passing views by visitors traveling farther up the mountain. In both instances the natural appearance of the landscape is substantially intact and the Forest Plan directive is being met.

On a smaller scale, effects of grazing and small project sites often have resulted in loss of small vegetative cover. Species compositions are reduced to mostly forbs and few if any grasses to provide soil stability. In some areas ground cover ratios are estimated to be less than 30% covered. The general condition of timber stands is declining and the effects of old age, disease, and insect activity are becoming more apparent. Deformities and witches brooms are evident as are dead tops, over-turned trees and red-needled crowns.

CHAPTER 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This Chapter describes the effects of each of the Alternatives on various components of the environment. It is organized to follow the same sequence of resource discussions as Chapter 3, the Affected Environment. This description of effects will provide the scientific and analytic basis for the comparisons of the Alternatives.

4.1 Alt. A - NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

4.1.1 Vegetation

4.1.1.1 Timber Resource

Implementing this alternative would meet the desired future condition of vegetation on the ski hill and would be accomplished without ski run expansion and modifications through projects initiated by the Forest. Stand densities would be reduced through implementation of the 1992 Howell Canyon Forest Health and Vegetation Management decision, species diversity would increase, ladder and down fuels would be decreased and stands would be less susceptible to large scale insect and disease infestations.

The Forest Plan Direction to provide healthy tree stands and vegetative diversity would be met. The forest cover types would be managed to enhance visual quality, diversity, and to provide for safety, snow deposition, recreation opportunities, and to provide for healthy forest cover. Priority would be given to the ski area to protect the investments from insects, disease and fire.

Species diversity would improve on the hill as the subalpine fir component is reduced and aspen, lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir occupy the more open sites as overstory trees are gradually removed. Seral species would be naturally or artificially reforested on unused ski terrain and within the small group openings that occur within the stands. Establishing unevenaged management on the hill would allow the development of multiple species of varying size and age classes and prevent potential elimination of the forest vegetation from one insect and/or disease agent.

Total stand management could eventually occur with this alternative. The insect and disease activity on the area should decrease as tree densities and average stand diameters are reduced and the older more disease prone trees are removed. Mountain pine beetle, dwarf mistletoe, yellow witches broom, and annosus root rot would be gradually reduced but not eliminated as these are important components of the forest ecosystem.

Beetles would continue to attack trees that windthrow or are stressed, but in reduced numbers as densities and diameters are reduced and trees become more vigorous.

A gradual reduction in the dwarf mistletoe rating would occur as emphasis is placed on removing the heaviest infected trees. Dwarf mistletoe would continue to cause serious losses in the lodgepole pine although at a reduced rate.

Fir broom rust would continue to cause eventual tree mortality in the subalpine fir. A reduction would occur in this disease as the more serious infected trees are removed.

The occurrence of annosus root rot should decrease as the larger subalpine fir are gradually replaced by younger trees. This would result in less windthrown and broken trees. The mixed conifers within the natural stands and the nonsusceptible aspen with irregular spacing and age distribution would result in less continuous root system contact and less chance for spread. The establishment of non-host trees within non-ski areas and in openings would reduce the spread of the disease.

Fuel ladders created by the brooms of fir broom rust and dwarf mistletoe would be gradually reduced as these diseases are reduced.

Potential pests would continue to include Western Spruce Budworm, Western Balsam Bark Beetle, and Douglas-fir Tussock Moth. Establishing the seral species on unused ski-runs and openings within stands would assist in reducing the amount of damage that may occur.

This alternative would allow the stands to be "bug/disease proofed" until stands can be replaced. Thinning out the suppressed slower growing and high-risk trees and leaving the best trees to increase their growth would subsequently increase their resistance to insect/disease.

The long-term and cumulative effect of this Alternative would be to perpetuate the existing regime of forest vegetation.

4.1.1.2 Non-Forest Vegetation

The continued use of sparse cover areas, such as the snowbed areas, will continue to produce large amounts of sediments through runoff and trampling. The nearby populations of Christ's paintbrush and Davis' wavewing would not be affected. Present activity would not affect the population of barrel cactus. No particular effect would accrue because of this Alternative.

4.1.1.3 Grazing Management

Cattle graze using a season-long grazing system and each permittee places his cattle in separate areas within the allotment. They begin the grazing season in those areas but end the season mixed at the upper elevations of the allotment. Approximately 50 head months of forage utilization occurs on the ski area and would continue independent of the operation of the ski area. One water

development would continue to be used during the summer months while the ski area uses the water during the winter season. Although limited in scope, cattle would continue to be a nuisance around the lodge area but would be little affected by recreationists. No long-term effects to grazing would accrue because of the Alternative.

4.1.1.4 Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species

None of the Rare or Sensitive plants (*Castilleja christii*, *Cymopterus davisii*, *Pediocactus simpsonii*) nor the recently listed Endangered plant (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) Ute Ladies tresses have been observed within any of the areas of current use or development. There is no current effect to these species.

4.1.2 Wildlife

4.1.2.1 Terrestrial Animals

The No Action Alternative would not result in changes to habitat on National Forest System (NFS) lands for general wildlife species, management indicator species, or threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. The long-term composite of wildlife species populations would continue, unaltered by this Alternative.

4.1.2.2 Management Indicator Species

There would be no additional effect to any management indicator species.

4.1.2.3 Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species

Bald eagles (threatened), peregrine falcons (endangered) and gray wolf (endangered) have not been identified as occurring in the project area. Several Forest Service sensitive species may inhabit the project area for part or all of the year. These species include the spotted bat, western big-eared bat, flammulated owl, northern goshawk, boreal owl. No additional effects to these species would occur.

4.1.3 Fisheries

About 27,000 gallons/day (0.04 cfs) are pumped from Bennett and Pomerelle Springs with only 7200 gallons/day consumed on peak use days. The remainder returns to the stream. This occurs year-round. The only potential impacts to the fisheries in Howell Creek from this alternative would be from removing 7200 gallons per day during the fall and winter, however, this quantity is immeasurably small and no specific effects have been determined at this time.

4.1.4 Hydrology

The Idaho Division of Environmental Quality is monitoring Howell Creek in 1997 to determine if water quality has been limited by activities in the watershed. The primary activities that may impact water quality are road construction (particularly

the reconstruction and surfacing of the main road but also that associated with timber harvest), the ski area, timber harvest, other recreation, and grazing.

Impacts associated with plowing of snow, with included sand and gravel, into drainage ways would likely continue unless the ski area is directed to modify their operation. Depending on the monitoring results, the State may eventually require additional pollution control. Normal Best Management Practices would include control of sediment, etc. from snowplowing of the parking lot and should be required for all alternatives.

If allowed to continue, the long-term effects of this alternative would be the eventual sedimentation of the effected segment of Howell Cr. and possible introduction of sediments into the main Howell Cr. channel.

4.1.5 Soils

Portions of the open ski slopes are very poorly vegetated. There is very little to nearly no grass on some areas. The existing vegetation is mostly forbs, lupin. Due to the sparse cover, these soils are at extreme risk of erosion by water, or trampling. The impact of cattle grazing the slopes has caused excessive soil disturbance and displacement in certain gathering areas and water erosion is occurring along the cow trails. The long-term effect of this Alternative would lead to further deterioration of these areas.

4.1.6 Heritage Resources

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, a comprehensive cultural resources inventory of the project area was completed in July 1996. One historic isolate, a rock cairn, was recorded and is believed to be associated with an historic survey or sheepherding activities. No sites have been identified that are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer reviewed the report and concurred that there would be no effect to any eligible heritage resources.

4.1.7 Recreation

As recreation demands continue to increase, Pomerelle will also experience additional demand for services and expanded opportunity. Not developing the proposed new facilities would eventually decrease the level of satisfaction for many skiers and snowboard riders. Ski slopes, parking areas, dining rooms and lodge facilities would become more crowded. Season opening would be controlled by the availability of natural snow. Improvement to the existing runs would be limited to vegetation management projects which have already been approved in a previous Environmental Assessment.

The long-term effect of this Alternative would be that the quality of the recreation experience would soon depreciate because of crowding. Potential new skiers may elect to begin their first experience at another location because of uncomfortable conditions.

4.1.8 Scenery

Changes to the scenery of the ski area would be limited to the effects of timber management activities within the existing stands of large forest vegetation. General appearances would be improved by removing portions of the existing dead materials and the disfigured trees currently affected by insects and diseases. The overall appearance would be more like a younger, healthier forest. Logging impacts would be mitigated by limiting access corridors and implementing the required erosion control plan. Little reduction of the current edge effects of runs would be realized. Subtle changes in the amount of aspen present through the area would be beneficial. The cumulative effect would be to continue the existing appearance characteristics.

4.2 Alt. B - PROPONENT'S PROPOSAL ALTERNATIVE

4.2.1 Vegetation

4.2.1.1 Timber Resources

Because of the opportunity to remove additional amounts of diseased or insect laden trees and woody materials from proposed new ski runs, the accelerated rates of stand sanitization would further reduce the risks from insect and disease attack and would more quickly achieve the Desired Future Condition than Alternative A. The cumulative effects would be similar to Alternative A.

4.2.1.2 Non-Forest Vegetation

This Alternative would change timber to non-forest vegetation for approximately 13 acres of new ski runs and an undetermined number of additional acres of small openings created within timber stands. Most acres within the timbered areas would eventually return to new trees but for awhile would transition through various non-forest plant stages. Cumulative effects would be similar to Alternative A.

4.2.1.3 Grazing Management

As artificial snow is usually of a higher density than natural snow and therefore slower to melt, additional acres would be less able to support grazing until later in the season. Fencing of pond sites to protect the pond liner would alter the grazing. Cattle may tend to congregate around these fenced areas, creating dusty conditions.

Summer recreationists using trails and other areas of the resort may drive cattle away from areas they might otherwise prefer to use. Conflict between trail users and cattle may increase and herds may become anxious and scattered.

4.2.1.4 Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species

There would be no effect to Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive plant species.

4.2.2 Wildlife

4.2.2.1 Terrestrial Animals

Past, present, and foreseeable future impacts on NFS lands and private lands near the project area have resulted in varying degrees of wildlife habitat degradation due to destruction, disturbance, and fragmentation of vegetative cover types. The additional development proposed at the Pomerelle Ski Resort would include similar activities, resulting in small, yet incremental, effects. Most of the project area is dominated by species accustomed to fragmented habitat and human disturbance due to 30 years of activity at the ski area.

The past, present, and foreseeable impacts to wildlife habitat in or near the project area have not, nor are expected to have, serious implications for the survival of any species. Within the Howell Canyon drainage there is approximately 5,400 acres of which 2,100 acres are forest communities. Many of the forest communities have been modified in the past. No clear cutting has occurred except for the development of ski runs. The incremental impacts of this and other similar alternatives would have negligible effects to wildlife habitat or wildlife populations in or near the project area.

There would be an irretrievable loss of forest wildlife habitat associated with clearing 10 acres of forest communities for additional ski runs. There would be an irretrievable and irreversible loss of 3 acres of forest and sagebrush/grass communities associated with the additional lodge, road, and parking facilities.

4.2.2.2 Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species

There would be no additional effects to Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive animal species.

4.2.3 Fisheries

This alternative would require pumping up to 150 gallons/minute from Bennett Springs and a two-acre reservoir for 55 days during the period of October 15 through the end of December. This would reduce the fall/winter flows of Howell Creek from what it is currently.

This Alternative would fail to meet the management goals and objectives of the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and the appended INFISH goals and objectives because it would substantially reduce the available spawning habitat for brook trout.

Pumping this amount from the Howell Creek drainage during the fall months could jeopardize the existing fish population of brook trout within the stream. As these fish are fall spawners, any reduction of stream flow during the low-flow period, especially when spawning occurs, would significantly impact these fish. The potential long-term effect might be the loss of this population of fish.

In order to protect the aquatic integrity and fish populations of Howell Creek, if water is to be removed it should occur during peak flows, namely during April, May, and June. This would offer the least impacts to the stream and would offer minimal net water loss after considering the return of snowmelt from previous year's snowmaking.

4.2.3.1 Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species

There would be no effect to Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive fish species.

4.2.4 Hydrology

The modification of the terrain including vegetation management to provide better ski run conditions has the potential to substantially impact the hydrology and water quality in the area. These potential impacts would be loss of runoff controlling vegetation and soil displacement which could eventually reach Howell Cr. An erosion control plan, as described for Alternative A, should be required for all site specific designs in which soil is displaced.

Snowmaking for this alternative requires a withdrawal rate of 0.334 cfs from Howell Creek or its tributary springs in the fall, 20% of the average flow at the National Forest boundary at this time of year. A permit to appropriate this amount of water would have to be obtained from the State. Storage in the proposed pond would need to be included in the application for permit to appropriate water, but surface runoff could easily make the initial filling in early spring each year, without pumping, when flows from snowmelt are ample. The cumulative effect of this Alternative would be the exchange of fall flows in Howell Cr. for extended summer flow due to prolonged runoff from the increased snowpack.

4.2.5 Soils

New areas of soil disturbance would occur at any of the proposed construction sites, however negative effects can be easily mitigated with cross-slope drainage, soil retention mulches, and rapid re-vegetation. Each construction site should have an erosion control plan developed as part of the design of the work. Silt retention structures may be warranted adjacent to live streams until proper functioning filters

of vegetation are established. No long-term effects are anticipated from this Alternative.

4.2.6 Heritage Resources

No known heritage resources are likely to be effected by this Alternative. Careful observation should be given during construction so that if potential resource materials are discovered they can be protected until determinations can be made by the Forest Archaeologist.

4.2.7 Recreation The proponent's proposal addresses existing and future recreation demands for winter and year-round facilities at the Pomerelle Ski Area. Minor conflicts over terrain use which could occur between skiers and snowmobilers have largely been eliminated by providing a parking area and trailhead for the snowmobile users. The proponent's proposal addresses Pomerelle's business strategy of capturing and expanding the beginner/novice market of skiers and would meet the needs of an identified segment of the recreation market. Year-long operation of the ski area facilities would also accommodate mountain bikers, group gatherings, horseback riders, day-hikers and environmental studies.

The cumulative effect of this Alternative would be that a greater level of recreation opportunity would be established in Howell Canyon, year-round. More people would likely adopt Howell Canyon as a target for recreation experiences.

4.2.8 Scenery

4.2.8.1 NEW LODGE AREA

The new lodge and related parking area would not be seen from any current location developed for viewer overlooks or from the Howell Canyon road system. Views of the area would be possible from Conner Ridge and from the Thompson electronics site. Although the prescribed VQO for the lodge area is Retention, the Forest Plan Standards and Guides prescribe that ski area developments need only remain in harmony with their setting to be acceptable. The lodge structure would be positioned with a substantial background of mixed conifer / deciduous forest vegetation. Material and color choices could easily compliment such a setting. The intended structure is not planned to be so large or tall as to be out of proportion with the setting. Harmony with the setting would be easily achieved, even for those locations which do actually view the lodge and parking areas.

4.2.8.2 TEACHING SLOPES AND AMPHITHEATER

Natural openings and large surface rock formations are intended to be retained in the teaching slopes and amphitheater and are such that even for on site viewers, the area would present a near natural appearance. Views from outside the ski area would not be possible.

4.2.8.3 SKI RUNS

In some locations, the original runs developed for Pomerelle failed to accurately follow the fall-line - the route perpendicular to the contour of the land. In the course of improving the condition of the natural timber stands there is an opportunity to realign some of the existing runs, to widen some existing runs and to create additional runs.

The realignment of "Instructor" and "Stampede" runs would most likely trade acres of clearing for acres of new timber stand created. In the course of making these changes, feathering of edges and allowing the run to take advantage of natural and newly created openings would have a net effect of reducing the current impact of hard edged runs. The runs would appear more like natural occurrences. The widening of "Chute #9" and "Fenceline" and the creation of a new run between "Stampede" and "Steer" would be easily accomplished by connecting openings created by timber stand sanitation projects. Irregular edges would be typical and adjacent variations of stand density would accommodate the change with only minor visible evidence.

Recontouring of the lower "Punch Bowl" would allow a more acceptable transition at the exit of "Chute #9" and a new "Instructor" run as they intersect the Spring Cr. drainage bottom. Fill materials from the shoulders of adjacent geological slumps in the "Punch Bowl" and "Bronc" runs could easily achieve this recontouring. Seeding and protection of the graded areas would be necessary to produce an adequate stand of protective vegetation. Seeding of additional grass onto many of the sparsely covered areas - often snow bank areas - would be beneficial for improvement of close range visual conditions.

4.2.8.4 TIMBER STAND MODIFICATIONS

Creating small openings in the timber canopy would soften the appearance of ski runs and add variety. Adjustments to the existing runs would largely be unnoticed. Changes within the timbered areas at future times would benefit from not having to compete with the uniformity of an even-aged stand. Removal of the dead "skeletons" in the alpine fir component would relieve the degenerating appearance that now exists. Healthy forest appearances would be likely to continue for some time.

The cumulative effect of the Alternative to scenery resources in Howell Canyon would not be seen. Continuation of the "near-natural" appearance would be expected. Vegetation management efforts would substantially improve the longevity of timbered areas on the ski area.

4.3 Alt. C - REDUCED SNOWMAKING ALTERNATIVE

4.3.1 Vegetation

4.3.1.1 Timber Resources

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.1.2 Non-Forest Vegetation

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.1.3 Grazing Management

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.1.4 Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.2 Wildlife

4.3.2.1 Terrestrial Animals

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.2.2 Management Indicator Species

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.2.3 Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.3 Fisheries

By limiting the pumping to 60 gallons/minute from Bennett Spring during October through December the effects to the brook trout population would be reduced from those of the Proponent's Proposal. Although less than the amount proposed in Alternative B, this would still reduce the fall/winter flows of Howell Creek to less than the current flows.

This Alternative would fail to meet the management goals and objectives of the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and the appended INFISH goals and objectives because it would reduce the available spawning habitat for brook trout rather than protect it.

Pumping this amount from the Howell Creek drainage during the fall months could jeopardize the existing fish population of brook trout within the stream. As these fish are fall spawners, any reduction of stream flow during the low-flow period, especially when spawning occurs, would significantly impact these fish. The potential long-term effect might be the loss of this population of fish.

4.3.3.1 Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.4 Hydrology

The soil disturbing effects of this Alternative would be the same as Alt.B. and have the same requirements for an erosion control plan.

Snowmaking would be reduced to a limited water supply rate of .13 cfs from the Howell Creek system, about 8% of the average flow at the National Forest boundary in the fall. Similar to Alt. B, a permit from the State to appropriate this amount of water, would have to be shown to be in the public interest and providing for conservation of water resources. Storage in the proposed pond would need to be included in the application for permit to appropriate water but could likely be filled in the early spring from surface runoff, without pumping, when flows from snowmelt are ample.

The cumulative effect of this Alternative would be similar to Alternative B but to a smaller extent.

4.3.5 Soils

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.6 Heritage Resources

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.3.7 Recreation

Effects would be essentially the same as Alternative B, with only minor difference in snow quality at isolated locations during the beginning of the ski season and similar effects at isolated high traffic locations during periods of limited natural snowfall.

4.3.8 Scenery

The effects would be the same as Alternative B, with the addition of added water features - the proposed Snowmaking Storage Ponds. The ponds would have an appearance similar to natural alpine lakes during the summer months. They would add interest for hikers and cyclists on the proposed trail system but may also attract cattle which would concentrate around the fences and produce dust beds, excrement and the attendant flies and odors.

4.4 Alt. D - FOREST SERVICE PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE

4.4.1 Vegetation

4.4.1.1 Timber Resources

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.4.1.2 Non-Forest Vegetation

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.4.1.3 Grazing Management

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.4.1.4 Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.4.2 Wildlife

4.4.2.1 Terrestrial Animals

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.4.2.2 Management Indicator Species

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.4.2.3 Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.4.3 Fisheries

Snow-making would use stored water accumulated during spring run-off and supplemented, if necessary, from the existing 18-20 gal/min. pumping throughout the year. It is anticipated that over the long term the net loss of water in the stream would be insignificant due to increased snow melt from the previous year of snow-making. The amount of water removed during the summer period would not noticeably affect the fisheries. The cumulative effect may in fact be that the fisheries would benefit as the additional snowmelt extends the stream discharge later into the season.

4.4.3.1 Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species

There would be no effect to threatened, endangered or sensitive fish species.

4.4.4 Hydrology

The soil disturbing effects of this Alternative would be the same as Alt. B and have the same requirements for an erosion control plan.

Snowmaking would be limited to using the existing culinary water system with a potential of .06 cfs. The .04 cfs withdrawn from Bennett Springs before it enters Howell Creek is not normally measurable in the total flow, as it is only about 2% of the average flow at the National Forest boundary in the fall. The additional flow of .02 cfs from Pomerelle Spring would otherwise seep into the groundwater system.

4.4.5 Soils

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.4.6 Heritage Resources

The effects would be the same as in Alternative B.

4.4.7 Recreation

The effect of this Alternative would be similar to Alt.C.

4.4.8 Scenery

The effects would be the same as Alternative C, with the addition of larger water features - the proposed Snowmaking Storage Ponds. The ponds would have an appearance similar to natural alpine lakes during the summer months. Although a visual addition for recreationists the ponds would not provide any additional recreation opportunities.

COMPARISON OF EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVES

figure 7

Affected Resources	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
	No Action	Proponent's Proposal	Reduced Snowmaking	F.S. Proposed Action
Veg				
Timber	-sanitize stands for veg. quality only	-same as Alt. A with faster achievements	-same as Alt. B	-same as Alt. B
Non Forest	- no change	-increase by 13 acres from new runs	-same as Alt. B	-same as Alt. B
Grazing	-no change	-forage availability delayed by artificial snow	-same as Alt. B	-same as Alt. B
T.E.S. Species	-none affected	-no add'l effects	-same as Alt. B	-same as Alt. B
Wildlife				
Habitat	- no add'l change	-minor conversion from forest to non-forest	-same as Alt. B	-same as Alt. B
Indicator Species	- none affected	-no add'l effects	-same as Alt. B	-same as Alt. B
T.E.S. Species	- none affected	-no add'l effects	-same as Alt. B	-same as Alt. B
Fisheries				
Habitat	-maintains low habitat effectiveness in fall	-fails to meet FLRMP -substantial reduction of spawning habitat	-fails to meet FLRMP -reduction of spawning habitat	-no identifiable negative affect
T.E.S. Species	-none present	-none affected	-none affected	-potential to improve stream discharge cycle
Hydrology				
	-State may require better sediment controls from parking/plowing	-add'l risk of erosion at construction sites -20% reduction in stream flow	-erosion risks similar to Alt. B -8% reduction in stream flow	-erosion effects same as Alt. B -effects of 2% reduction in stream flow not measurable
Soils				
	-maintains some areas with limited veg. production, high erosion risk	- minor add'l erosion risks	- same as Alt. B	-same as Alt. B

continuation of:
COMPARISON OF EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVES

figure 7

Affected Resources	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
	No Action	Proponent's Proposal	Reduced Snowmaking	F.S. Proposed Action
Heritage	-no significant resources affected	-no significant resources affected	-same as Alt. B	-same as Alt. B
Recreation	-soon will not meet demands of expanding skier population. No opportunity for summer activities.	-meets expanding user demand -provides new summer opportunities	-similar to Alt. B with reduced quality/quantity of snow in isolated locations and early season	-similar to Alt. C with larger, more obvious ponds
Scenery	-slowly achieve better stand conditions, healthy appearance	-faster improvements in timber appearance -opportunities to soften edges	-similar to Alt. B with addition of ponds. Water feature may attract cattle.	-same as Alt. C

CHAPTER 5 LIST OF PREPARERS

The following individuals provided input and/ or content review to the Environmental Assessment.

Botany	Robert Moseley, Plant Ecologist, Idaho Fish and Game Dept. - Conservation Data Center
Engineering	Jim Simpson, Civil Engineer
Fisheries	John Wm. Lloyd, Fisheries Biologist
Grazing	James Chard, Range Conservationist
Heritage Resources	Roshanna Stone, Archaeologist
Hydrology	Valdon Hancock, Hydrologist
NEPA Process	Sharon Paris, NEPA Specialist
Public Affairs	Ed Waldapfel, Public Affairs Officer
Recreation	Zeke Zimmerman, Recreation Planner
Recreation and Scenery	Terry Fletcher, Landscape Architect
Soils	David Gilman, Soils Scientist - consultant
Timber	David Bassler, Forester
Wildlife	Tom Bandolin, Wildlife Biologist
Wildlife	Howard Hudak, Wildlife Biologist

Appendix A

Burley Ranger District
Sawtooth National Forest

POMERELLE SKI AREA MASTER PLAN PROPOSAL

SUMMARY OF SCOPING RESULTS

A content analysis was completed of all the letters received. A copy of these letters can be found in the project record at the Burley Ranger District office in Burley. The purpose of the content analysis is to provide the Interdisciplinary Team and Line Officers with a summary of input received and the origin of that input.

The process used to complete the analysis is as follows:

A - Determination of general categories that people addressed. Those categories are as follows:

CODE	CATEGORY
1	Water Rights
2	Support For Proposal
3	Mt. Harrison Road
4	Recreation Opportunities Other Than Winter
5	Forest Health
6	Specific Facilities
7	Permit Boundary Expansion
8	Scoping Issues/Alternatives
9	Wildlife
99	Other Comments

B - Each letter was given a number as it was received by the Burley Ranger District. This is done in order to provide a quick tracking record of what was done with the contents of each letter.

C - Each letter was read and the content was analyzed. The "view or opinion" was determined and recorded. If "reasons" for the view or opinion were given, these were also recorded. A "code" was assigned to each view/opinion to facilitate sorting of like comments (see list of codes above).

The following is information from the content analysis.

Total Input Received	122 Letters
Type Of Input	38 Personal Letters
	56 Personal Letters From School Student Project
	28 Form Letters (Initiated by Pomerelle Ski Area)
	=====
	122 Total

Origin of Input

1. By State

State	# Of Letters
Idaho	108
Utah	1
Unknown	13

2. By City

Aberdeen	52
American Falls	1
Twin Falls	8
Albion	3
Buhl	1
Burley	33
Dietrich	1
Jerome	2
Rupert	1
Horseshoe Bend	1
Kuna	1
Boise	1
Salt Lake City	1
Heyburn	1
Unknown	15

The following is a list of Federal, State, and local agencies from which letters were received.

Idaho State Department of Water Resources
American Falls Police Department
Idaho State Department of Fish and Game

The following is a list of elected officials submitting letters.

City of Burley
City of Albion
Cassia County Commissioners
State Representative Jim Kempton

Organizations that submitted written input include:

Idaho State Snowmobile Association
Mt. Harrison Snowmobile Club
First Security Bank
West One Bank
Cassia County Abstract Co., Ltd.
American Heritage Academy, Inc.
Burley High School
Twin Falls Christian Academy
KBAR-KZDX Radio

The following persons, organizations, and agencies provided comments during the Scoping Phase of the Pomerelle Ski Area Master Plan Proposal. The list contains the number assigned each letter by the Forest Service.

- #1 Idaho Department of Water Resources - Allan Merritt
- #2 Charles Lehrman
- #3 Richard Huizinga - Radio KBAR-KZKX
- #4 William Schafer
- #5 Cynthia Fowler
- #6 Cassia County Commissioners - Tim Hurst
- #7 Vic Bloch
- #8 Boise Cascade - Ken Meierotto
- #9 Jim & Peggy Basinger
- #10 Aberdeen Middle School (51 letters)
- #11 Charles A. Warren DDS
- #12 Cassia County Commissioners - John Adams, Chairman
- #14 Mt. Harrison Snowmobile Club
- #14 Idaho State Snowmobile Association
- #15 Burley High School (5 letters)
- #16 Evan De Nelson
- #17 Mini-Cassia Development Commission
- #18 Glenn S. Arrington
- #19 Renee Blume
- #20 West One Bank - Lawrence Flournoy
- #21 American Heritage Academy, Inc.
- #22 Bob, Carole & Todd Stevens
- #23 Cassia County Abstract Co., Ltd. - Lex H. Kunau
- #24 Cassia County Abstract Co., Ltd. - Richard S. Harper
- #26 Twin Falls Christian Academy
- #27 Ruth Artheres
- #28 Chuck Maxwell
- #29 City of Burley - Mayor Frank Bauman
- #30 Robert Stuart Junior High School - Keth Mietzner
- #30 Robert Stuart Junior High School - Lisa Butler
- #31 Earl L. Warthen
- #32 Burley Christian Academy
- #33 Ed Fournier
- #34 American Falls Police Department - Jerry Hubbs, Chief
- #35 First Security Bank - Randall E. Hawkins
- #36 City of Albion - Donald Danner, Mayor
- #37 Marge Dalton
- #38 Form Letters signed by Leon Street, Ews Praytor, A. Kleink Jr., Mark Moorman, Kay Flythe, Dean A. Hamilton, Cliff Jackson, Renee Keller, J.H. Roper, Tressa Valdez, William Morgan, Kathy Eckley, P.C. Stephenson, Charles E. Skaggs, Betty Wiseman, Virgil Cole, Connie Cole, Martha Klink, E.E. Bud Brinegar, Glen Kunau, Phil Weech, Marcia Blauer, Stephan W. Ross, June Page, D. Sedaur, Jim Kempton, E. Schutte
- #39 Idaho State Department of Fish & Game - Carl Nellis

The following is a brief, overview summary of the comments received with regards to the Categories listed above.

1 - WATER RIGHTS

Input received here focused on the need for waters right permits or water right approvals to cover expected new water diversions. If new

wells are drilled, well drilling permit approvals are needed. Other response stated that present size and projected size of the ski area will have an effect on the watershed. Concern was expressed that adding more snowmaking equipment will affect groundwater recharge. Lack of sewage treatment for present operations is a concern as well as for any expanded use. Grooming of slopes in winter and summer is a concern as this action drives frost deeper into the surface soil which affects runoff and ability of groundwater recharge. Water rights for consumptive and non-consumptive uses are held by Water District 45-F Marsh dating back to 1881 - these users are concerned about affects on quality and quantity of water supply.

Impacts to local hydrology should be thoroughly analyzed. New roads, hard surface parking lots and removal of vegetation can all influence snow melt which in turn impacts water quality, quantity and timing of high flow events. Winter snow removal sites need to be analyzed for impacts to surface waters, both from a flow perspective and a water quality perspective.

2 - SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL

Almost without exception, the comments received expressed support for the proposal and encouraged Forest Service approval. New facilities will be good for beginner skiers and will increase safety by providing separation between beginners and others. Some responses offered praise for Woody Anderson and his staff and based on their track record felt that the proposed expansion should be approved. Many stated that this ski area provides an excellent opportunity for school ski programs. The economic growth resulting from this expansion would continue to be a benefit to local economies. Others suggested benefits to recreation outside of the winter season. The proposal is in line with plans by other jurisdictions such as the City of Albion, Cassia County Comprehensive Plan, and the Forest Plan.

3 - MT HARRISON ROAD

Concerns were expressed over the condition of this road from a safety standpoint - encouraged the Forest Service to support re-establishing the funding for paving the road.

4 - RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES OTHER THAN WINTER

Some input suggested looking closely at what the ski areas in Utah are doing, especially in the area of what they offer in the other three seasons in the way of recreation opportunities.

5 - FOREST HEALTH

One comment suggested that the Forest Service maintain the ability to harvest trees in the area in order to maintain or improve forest health.

6 - SPECIFIC FACILITIES

Adding parking for snowmobiles is greatly appreciated. One organization offered to work with the Forest Service and the ski area

to establish an alternative route that would meet the needs of the snowmobilers. Support for additional lights for night skiing was

stated. Facilities for summer theatre and mountain biking are desirable. The concept of a day care center would be well received. Concern about the need to do something with the current parking lot was expressed.

7 - PERMIT BOUNDARY EXPANSION

It was proposed by the snowmachine organization that the boundary line for the expansion area be changed to the tree line northwest of the parking areas to avoid denying historic access to snowmobile users. They would like to have a way for snowmobiles to enter the Connor Ridge and Connor Flat area. They have offered to work with the ski area and Forest Service to identify a small portion of the area to use as an access corridor.

8 - SCOPING ISSUES/ALTERNATIVES

One individual stated that they felt the list of issues and alternatives stated in the Scoping Document were adequate.

9 - WILDLIFE

Input from Fish and Game indicates that from a winter use perspective, the developments will have a minor affect on fish and wildlife resources. They asked that the Forest Service consider impacts resulting from manipulation of vegetation or topography which leads to a net loss of spring, summer and fall habitats for wildlife - new roads, parking lots, modification of ski runs, etc.

Fish and Game as recommends that the Forest Service conduct a Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP) analysis, such as was done at Black Pine Mine, and replace lost habitat as near the Pomerelle site as possible. Fish and Game expressed willingness to provide presentation on a HEP team to assist the Forest Service and area operator in mitigating wildlife habitat losses in a reasonable, financially rational manner.

99- OTHER COMMENTS

Concern was expressed by an individual that the current use and increased use the proposed expansion would bring is having an effect of bird populations in this area. He stated that this area is part of the Minidoka Bird Sanctuary. The effects of this can be seen in the abundance of beetles that are affecting forest growth.

A local radio station pledged their resources to support the expansion proposal.

The Forest Service was thanks for their concern and care of Howell Canyon, Pomerelle Ski Area and Lake Cleveland.

One individual felt that the two primary benefits of the proposal are people being able to learn to ski quicker and getting young people involved in skiing, the more time they spend skiing, the less time cruising Main Street.

An inconsistency between the Scoping Paper and the news release regarding the square footage of the Learning Center was noted.