



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Sawtooth
National
Forest

2647 Kimberly Road East
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



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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.

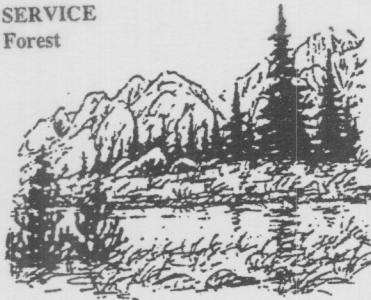


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