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Eastern Region Winter Sports Team
Green Mountain & Finger Lakes, White Mountain National Forests
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File Code: 1950/2720-2
Date: June 16, 2006

Dear Planning Participant,

I am writing to invite you to comment on two proposed projects at the Waterville Valley Ski Area. The projects are located within the Ski Area permit boundary, on the Pemigewasset Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) within the Town of Waterville Valley in Grafton County, New Hampshire.

The Waterville Valley Ski Area (WV) is currently managed under a long-term Special Use Permit to Booth Creek Corporation (Permittee). Each year the Permittee submits project proposals that meet company objectives for growth, customer service, safety and resource protection. The projects in this Scoping Report were proposed in March, 2006. The two projects currently under consideration include 1) lighting a portion of The Pasture Trail (Trail 35) in order to provide alternate evening tubing opportunities at specified days and times and 2) widening a portion of Upper Valley Run (Trail 9) to address safety concerns near the off-loading area of Lift B, "Quadzilla".

The enclosed public comment or "scoping" report provides additional details about these projects and instructions on how to comment. This document is also posted on our WMNF web page: www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white_mountain/, under Projects and Plans.

I am writing to you because you own property or live near the project area or have expressed interest in this or similar projects. I am interested in receiving your comments about the Permittee's proposal, including any information about the project area that could help us improve the projects. If you choose to comment on these proposals, please submit your comments no later than Monday, July 17, 2006. Please see further details about the analysis and comment process in the enclosed Scoping Report.

If you would like to visit the site proposed for lighting, we will host a site visit from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM on Wednesday, July 5. Please contact Susan Mathison at 603-536-1315 or smathison@fs.fed.us if you are planning to join us for the site visit.

Thank you for your interest in the management of the White Mountain National Forest.

Sincerely,

/s/ Beth LeClair
BETH LECLAIR
District Ranger/Team Leader

Scoping Report
Waterville Valley Ski Area Special Use Permit
Trail Lighting and Trail Widening Project Proposals
June, 2006

The Eastern Region Winter Sports Team is conducting an environmental analysis in partnership with the White Mountain National Forest for two proposed projects in the Waterville Valley Ski Area.

The Waterville Valley Ski Area (WV) is currently managed under Special Use Permit (SUP) to Booth Creek Corporation (Permitee). Each year the Permittee submits project proposals which meet company objectives for growth, customer service, safety, and resource protection. The two projects included in this public comment or "scoping" report were proposed in March, 2006.

The two projects currently under consideration include 1) The Pasture Trail (Trail 35) Lighting - lighting a portion of Trail 35 in order to provide alternate evening tubing opportunities at specified days and times and 2) Upper Valley Run (Trail 9) Widening - widening a portion of Trail 9 to address safety concerns near the off-loading area of Lift B, "Quadzilla".

Location of Project Area
The proposed projects are located within the Waterville Valley Special Use Permit Area on the Pemigewasset Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF), within the Town of Waterville Valley in Grafton County, New Hampshire. The Project Area is within the alpine ski area permit boundary and is located entirely within National Forest System Lands that are designated by the 2005 White Mountain National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) as Management Area (MA) 7.1, Alpine Ski Areas.

Purpose and Need
These projects are proposed and advocated by the Permitee who has specified the following purposes and needs:
1) Trail 35 Lighting: Evening snow tubing occurs just below the lower section of Trail 22 from 5:30 to 9:30 PM on Saturday evenings through the snow season as well as on Wednesday and Friday evenings during the Christmas/New Years school vacation and the Presidents' Day vacation week. Although existing lighting of this area is adequate, the run-out area at the bottom of the slope does not meet safety standards for this activity in this location. Expansion of the tubing run-out area is not feasible in its current location due to its proximity to the main base lodge, ski shop and equipment rental buildings. The Permitee proposes that the placement of lighting along the J-bar slope and relocating the snow tubing and run-out area to this trail will address the need of providing a complementary evening recreation opportunity while meeting required safety standards.

2) Trail 9 Widening: Lift B, "Quadzilla", currently offloads mid-slope along Trail 9 as shown on the attached map. The existing trail configuration immediately above the upper Lift B tower funnels skiers and boarders into a narrow area at the top of Valley Run (Trail 8) where other skiers and boarders are offloading. Trail 9 is designed for skiers and boarders of intermediate

ability; Trail 8 is designed for novice skiers and boarders. Intermediate skiers are funneled into a narrow portion of a novice trail in an area where many skiers and boarders are collecting themselves, adjusting gear and clothing, and groups are assembling. The combination of higher-speed skiers and boarders from Trail 9 and off-loading congestion in an area designed for novice users poses a safety concern. The purpose of and need for this project is to improve skier and boarder safety in an area which hosts skiers and boarders of varying abilities by widening the trail and reducing congestion in the off-loading area of Lift B.

Forest Plan

While this analysis considers a Project proposed by the Permitee, the purpose and need for the project must be in compliance with the Forest Plan. Indeed, in order for the Forest Service to consider this proposal, a number of conditions must be met, among them compliance with the WMNF Forest Plan.

At this point in the analysis, each of the Proposed Project's "Purpose and Need" meet three of the Forest Plan's Forest-wide Goals for Alpine Skiing, Recreation, and Recreation Special Uses:

- The White Mountain National Forest will maintain and provide quality alpine skiing and related opportunities on the Forest through partnerships with the private sector (Forest Plan, p. 1-4),
- The White Mountain National Forest will provide a range of quality recreation activities and opportunities (Forest Plan, p. 1-10), and
- The Forest Service will work with the private sector through Special Use permits to provide recreation opportunities (areas, facilities, services, and events) that the Forest Service alone is not able to offer, and that are consistent with the Desired Future Condition (Forest Plan, p. 1-15).

National Forest System Lands within the Project Area are designated as MA 7.1. The Proposed Projects each meet the Purpose described for MA 7.1:

> Maintain the range of recreation opportunities by recognizing the potential for alpine skiing, snowboarding, and year-round recreation activities at the four alpine ski areas managed by the private sector under Special Use Permit authority. Recognize the importance of current facilities in concentrating use within small areas (less than 0.05 percent of total acreage) of the National Forest (Forest Plan, p. 3-31).

Furthermore, the Proposed Projects would meet the Project Area's "Desired Future Condition" for MA 7.1, as described in the Forest Plan.

> These areas will be highly developed. Loon Mountain, Attitash/Bear Peak, and Waterville Valley Ski Areas are in close proximity to substantially developed environments on adjacent private lands. Wildcat Ski Area, surrounded by National Forest land, will not have this high level of neighboring development. Large numbers of users may be present, sights and sounds of human activity will be readily evident, and the interaction between users will be moderate to high. Facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Facilities including parking lots, structures, and utilities will be evident, and are designed to be compatible with the values that make the area attractive to the users.
>
> Management and operating practices are aimed at enhancing permitted recreation activities at the area while protecting the natural resources and visual characteristics.
>
> Vegetation will be managed to meet the objectives of the alpine ski areas.
>
> Each of these alpine ski areas is authorized by Special Use permit. The permit is a legal document that defines the area, describes management of the full range of recreation activities provided by the area, and incorporates resource protection requirements.

Special use permits must be consistent with Forest Plan standards and guidelines, goals and objectives, and management area direction. (Forest Plan, p. 3-31)

The Proposed Projects would meet the purposes and needs specified by the Permitee as well as the Goals, Objectives, and Desired Future Condition of the area as specified in the Forest Plan by:

1) providing a safe, ancillary snowplay opportunity for evening tubing on Trail 35, and
2) improving public safety through trail widening along a portion of Trail 9.

Proposed Actions

The Proposed Actions are outlined in the table below. Please see attached map for project locations within the permit area.

Project	Project Description	Important Considerations
1	Install up to five light poles, each with up to three light fixtures, along the southwest edge of Trail 35 for evening snow tubing.	1. The objective of the lights' design and placement would be to minimize uplighting and glare. All light fixtures would include directional shields; no light would be directed above horizontal. 2. Five utility poles, each 30' tall with up to three light fixtures, would be installed immediately adjacent to the tree line and existing line of snow-making facilities along the southwest edge of the trail. Electric lines to the lights would be buried in conduit parallel to the existing snowmaking lines. 3. Trail 35 would be lit for snow tubing from 5:30 to 9:30 PM on Saturday evenings through the snow season as well as on Wednesday and Friday evenings during the Christmas/New Years school vacation and the Presidents' Day vacation week. 4. The area contains no sensitive plants, fragile soils, wildlife or heritage resource concerns.
2	Widen a section of Trail 35 to improve safety conditions in the off-loading area of Lift B.	1. Trees and saplings would be removed from the southern edge of the lower portion of Trail 9 across from the uppermost lift tower. 2. The area in which trees and saplings proposed to be cut is approximately 150 feet long and 30 feet wide, or approximately 0.10 acres. Most trees and saplings would remain on site; some tree boles would be removed from the site for use as firewood. After tree removal, stumps would be removed and the area smoothed to the contour of the adjacent slope. 3. The area contains no sensitive plants, fragile soils, wildlife or heritage resource concerns. 4. A triangular section of Trail 35 just above Lift B is roped off in order to direct traffic away from the off-loading area. The proposed widening on the south side of the trail would allow revegetation of the slope immediately above the upper most lift tower in this roped-off area. The revegetation would improve safety in the off-loading area, allow the removal of the orange safety fence and result in essentially unchanged total trail surface area; any additional snowmaking needs precipitated by the trail re-configuration will be negligible.

Environmental Analysis
Forest Service resource specialists have studied the Proposed Projects, conducted preliminary site-specific analysis and ensured that the Projects are consistent with the Forest Plan direction for resource management and protection.

It is anticipated that the Proposed Projects will not result in individual or cumulative significant effects on the environment; the analysis of these Projects can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA) as follows:

1) Trail 35 Lighting: It is anticipated that this decision is categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) because it is within a category in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) Chapter 30, Section 31.12 (5) and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal. Specifically, this is within FSH 1909.15-2004-3, Chapter 31.12-5 Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and trails.

2) Trail 9 Widening: It is anticipated that this decision is categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) because it is within a category in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) Chapter 30, Section 31.2 (1) and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal. Specifically, this is within FSH 1909.15-2004-3, Chapter 31.2 (1) Contruction and reconstruction of trails.

What decisions will be made?
An environmental analysis will evaluate the site-specific proposals, issues, and effects of the proposed projects. The Eastern Region Winter Sports Team District Ranger/Team Leader is the deciding official for this project; the District Ranger/Team Leader will review the environmental analysis, including public comment and resource specialists' input and will decide:

1. Should the Proposed Projects be approved as proposed?
2. Is the information in the analysis sufficient to implement the proposed activities?
3. What mitigation measures and monitoring requirements should the Forest Service apply to these proposed activities in the project area?

Public Involvement
At this time the Forest Service is inviting you to make site-specific comments on these two proposed projects. We suggest you consider the following questions when looking at the proposed projects:

- Do the Proposed Projects move the Project Area towards the desired condition envisioned in the Forest Plan while protecting the environment?
- Is there anything about this area that the Forest Service may not know which might affect the decision regarding the Proposed Projects?

At this time, your comments may be provided orally or in writing (phone, letter, FAX, or e-mail) and must be received by July 17, 2006. Please be sure that your comments are in specific reference to the Proposed Projects at the Waterville Valley Ski Area.

Please note that comments received in response to this scoping report, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Persons may request that a submission be withheld from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting

such confidentiality should be aware that confidentiality is granted in only very limited circumstances. The Forest Service will inform the requester of its decision regarding a request for confidentiality. Where the request is denied, the submission will be returned, and the requester notified that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.

Comments should be addressed to Beth LeClair, Eastern Region Winter Sports Team District Ranger/Team Leader in one of the following ways:

By Mail – Pemigewasset Ranger District, 1171 NH Route 175, Holderness, NH 03245, ATTN: Waterville Valley Ski Area, Trail Widening and Lighting Projects/Susan Mathison;
By FAX – (603) 536-5147, ATTN: Waterville Valley Ski Area, Trail Widening and Lighting Projects /Susan Mathison
By phone – (603) 536-1315 (voice) or 603- 536-3281 (TTY), ask for Susan Mathison
By email – smathison@fs.fed.us
Information about this proposal is also available on our website at:
http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white_mountain/projects/projects/index.php

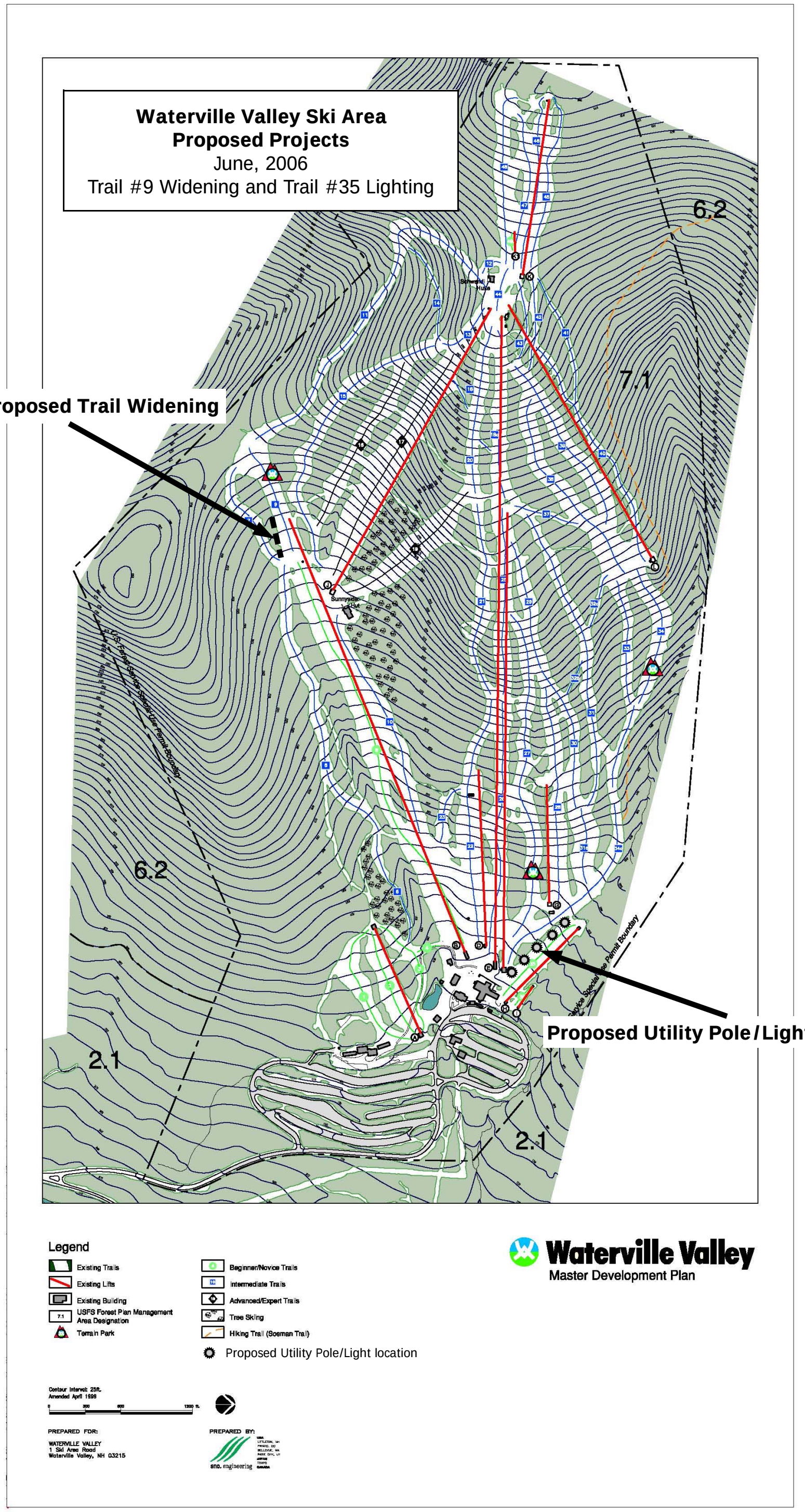
Please include the following information with your comments:

- Your name, address (include in any email correspondence), and, if possible, telephone number; and
- Site-specific facts or comments concerning the proposed Waterville Valley Ski Area, Trail Widening and Lighting Projects, along with supporting information that you believe should be consider in reaching a decision.

It is the responsibility of interested parties to respond to this notice within the established time period. No means of communication is perfect. Please contact us at the above address and/or phone number if a document is not available or delivered at the expected time, to ascertain its availability, and if necessary, arrange an alternate delivery method.

If you decide to provide comments, you will automatically receive a copy of the Decision Memo. It is important to note that decisions associated with projects that are categorically excluded cannot be appealed pursuant to 36 CFR 215. If you do not have specific comments, but wish to continue to receive information about these projects, please advise us accordingly.

Thank you for your interest in helping us to manage the Waterville Valley Ski Area on the White Mountain National Forest.


Waterville Valley Ski Area
Proposed Projects
June, 2006
Trail #9 Widening and Trail #35 Lighting
Proposed Trail Widening
Proposed Utility Pole/Light locations
6.2
7.1
6.2
2.1
2.1
Legend
Existing Trails
Existing Lifts
Existing Building
USFS Forest Plan Management Area Designation
Terrain Park
Beginner/Novice Trails
Intermediate Trails
Advanced/Expert Trails
Tree Skiing
Hiking Trail (Soeman Trail)
Proposed Utility Pole/Light location
Waterville Valley
Master Development Plan
Contour Interval: 25ft.
Amended April 1999
PREPARED FOR:
WATERVILLE VALLEY
1 Ski Area Road
Waterville Valley, NH 03215
PREPARED BY:
sno. engineering