



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 31, 2012

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Special Use Permit for Statue near Whitefish Mountain Resort Reauthorized

KALISPELL, MT - Flathead National Forest Supervisor, Chip Weber, announced today that he is reauthorizing a special use permit for The Knights of Columbus Council No. 1328 of Kalispell, Montana for the display of a statue on a small parcel of federal land within the Whitefish Mountain Resort permit boundary at Big Mountain in northwestern Montana. The permit is reauthorized for ten years and is for the display of a statue of Jesus Christ on a 25 foot by 25 foot parcel of land near the top of Chair Two at Whitefish Mountain Resort.

Weber says he is reauthorizing the permit because “I understand the statue has been a long-standing object in the community since 1955, and I recognize that the statue is important to the community for its historical heritage based on its association with the early development of the ski area on Big Mountain.” The statue’s historic value and eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places is in part directly linked to the current physical location of the statue.

The decision was reached using an environmental analysis process for Categorical Exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Flathead National Forest accepted public comment from October 19 to December 8, 2011. The public comment period and other forms of public involvement are vital components of natural resource and related decisions for the Forest Service. Approximately 95,000 comments were received and reviewed. The comments did not identify substantive concerns related to environmental conditions.

Once the new permit is returned to the Flathead National Forest by the Kalispell Knights of Columbus with signature and payment, it will be signed by the Forest Supervisor and remains in effect for the next ten years.

To view documents associated with the special use permit reauthorization please visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/flathead/projects> and click on the *Knights of Columbus Special Use Permit Reauthorization Project (CE)* link.

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