



4/5/2019

Re: Jackson Hole Mountain Resort (JHMR) Tram Snow Drift Project

Location: 43° 35' 50" N, 110° 52' 13" W – JHMR, Bridger-Teton National Forest, Teton County Wyoming. JHMR is located adjacent to Teton Village, Teton County, Wyoming.

Dear Interested Public:

On July 23, 2018, JHMR submitted a proposal to the Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) to initiate environmental review of a project on National Forest System lands, the Tram Snow Drift Mitigation Project. The BTNF accepted their proposal and is initiating review in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We anticipate preparing a categorical exclusion (CE) for this project.

This notice invites public comment on the scope of our environmental review. Let us know of any concerns you may have about potential environmental impacts of this project and any changes that might reduce those impacts.

If it is found that there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the project that may result in significant individual or cumulative environmental effects, it is expected that this project may be authorized by the use of a Categorical Exclusion. As a result of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 and the Agriculture Act of 2014, the Forest Service will no longer offer notice, comment and appeal opportunities pursuant to 36 CFR 215 for categorically excluded projects. Instead, the Forest Service will offer public comment opportunities as provided for in its NEPA procedures found in 36 CFR 220. If this is determined to be a categorically excluded project, this will be the only opportunity to provide comments about the environmental impacts of the project. Although the objection process would not be available in that case, the final decision will be responsive to project-specific comments.

Following this introduction, this scoping notice states the purpose and need for the project, describes the projects in detail, and provides instructions for submitting comments.

This scoping period will be your only opportunity to comment. To establish eligibility, comments must be submitted during the 14-day period following the date of this notice.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

Since JHMR installed the aerial tram to the top of Rendezvous Mountain in 1966, the travel path of tram cabins has been blocked by the formation of a large snow drift during periods of high snowfall. The problem has persisted even after the tram was replaced in 2008, raising the travel height of the tram cabin several feet.

The situation came to a head two winters ago (2016/17) when the resort received over 600 inches of snowfall. By January 13, a loaded tram cabin was within a foot of touching the snow surface. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) code requires a minimum of 5 feet of clearance between a moving tram cabin and any fixed object. Less clearance poses a safety risk to tram riders as well as skiers or other people below. As a result of this recurrent issue, the resort has to routinely remove snow from beneath the tram resulting in risk, effort, and expense.

In 2017, the resort launched an extensive study to determine ways to reduce the size and height of the snow drift that forms under the travel path of the tram. That study, coupled with the experience of JHMR snow safety personnel, indicated that the best way to reduce the height of the drift was to reduce the height of the minor ridge in the terrain upwind of the tram centerline to change the snow deposition pattern.

Reflecting these considerations, the purpose and need for action are to:

- Provide safe operation of the tram for both resort visitors and JHMR employees.

- Reduce the safety risk when JHMR employees physically remove snow in the travel path of the tram cabin.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed project is described below and shown on the attached Figure 1.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Remove vegetation from grading site upwind of the tram centerline.
- Harvest weathered rocks.
- Complete final layout.
- Recontour the terrain.
- Dispose of excess material within the Special Use Permit boundary.
- Reclaim the tram drift site and stabilize any on-mountain disposal sites.

REMOVE VEGETATION ON GRADING SITE

A limited amount of small tree/brush vegetation would be cleared from the grading site, about 0.9 acres roughly 75 feet south of the tram centerline, just below the top terminal. There are no federally listed threatened or endangered plant species on the site, but some Forest Service sensitive species and Wyoming species of concern were found during the project planning phase. In fall 2018, these plants were transplanted to a similar site south of the project.

HARVEST WEATHERED ROCKS

Weathered rocks would be collected from the site and temporarily stored for use in site reclamation. This would be mostly hand work, with some use of small loaders (e.g., bobcats). The rock would be stockpiled on site.

COMPLETE FINAL LAYOUT

A detailed project layout (slope staking) would then be performed to ensure that the heavy equipment operators recontour the terrain exactly as designed.

RECONTOUR THE TERRAIN

About 4,400 cubic yards of material would be removed to lower the minor ridge to obtain the desired slope contour. All of the grading work would be performed by JHMR personnel using a combination of mechanical manual methods. Based on the construction and excavation work performed to install the new tram, it is estimated that all the excavation could be performed with very limited blasting. If blasting were required, it would be completed by JHMR.

DISPOSE OF EXCESS MATERIAL

Excess material from the site would be put to use in several locations throughout the resort. Most would be placed on the existing Hanging Rock ski run which currently has an all rock surface. Some would be used to fill in an excavation that was created for a surface lift formerly located in Rendezvous Bowl. Any remaining material would be deposited on the existing summer road network. All fill would be placed in previously disturbed areas, and fills would be designed to ensure stability. See Figure 2

RECLAIM THE SITE

Once the recontouring was complete, the surface of the site would be reclaimed to its original condition to the greatest extent practical. This would include spreading a limited amount of top soil, replacing the stockpiled weathered rocks, and reseeding the site using a Forest Service approved seed mix, including seed harvested from the area.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMING

Construction of this project would begin in the construction season following authorization, projected to be summer of 2019. The project should be complete by December 2019.

HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

It is important that reviewers provide comments in a way that is useful to the agency in preparing the analysis and decision. Comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns related to the environmental effects of the proposed projects. The BTNF will consider cited references if the articles are submitted with the comment letter, and if the reviewer identifies the relevance of the articles to specific actions and effects of these particular projects. The submission of timely and specific comments can affect a reviewer's ability to participate in subsequent judicial review.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not establish standing for the respondent to initiate subsequent judicial review.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 14 calendar days following the date of this notice.

Please address any form of comments as attention: JHMR Tram Snow Drift Project or JHMR LVE Power Line Project. Electronic comments must be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-bridger-teton-jackson@fs.fed.us. Written comments must be submitted to: Bridger-Teton National Forest - Jackson Ranger District, 340 N. Cache St. P.O. Box 1689, Jackson, WY 83001, attention Mary Moore. Comments may be hand-delivered to 340 N. Cache St. between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Please feel free to pass this letter on to others you think may have an interest or concern with this project.

Sincerely,



Mary Moore

Jackson District Ranger

Bridger-Teton National Forest

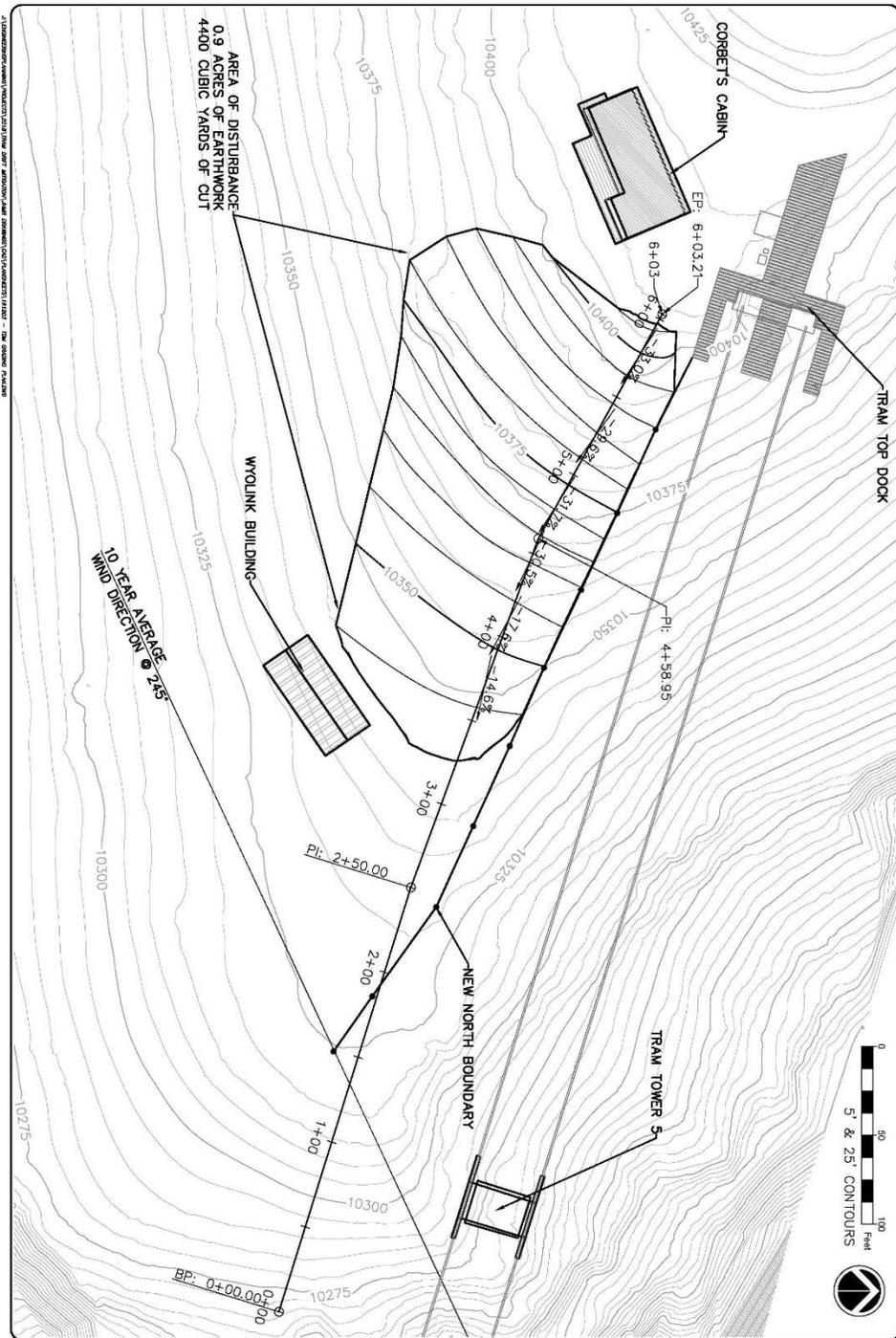
In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov .

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

FIGURE 1



Scale: 1" = 50'
 Date: 12/06/13
 Sheet: 1 OF 1
 No: 1500-242

PREPARED FOR: JACKSON HOLE MOUNTAIN RESORT
TRAM DRIFT MITIGATION
 GRADING PLAN 181206
 EXISTING GRADE 2008 LIDAR
 TETON COUNTY WYOMING



ORIGINAL SIZE = 11"x17"

FIGURE 2

