

File Code: 2720
Date: August 1, 2019

Dear Interested Party,

The Dillon Ranger District of the White River National Forest (WRNF) is soliciting comments on a proposal from Breckenridge Ski Resort (BSR) to construct, operate, and maintain an additional chairlift within existing lift-served ski terrain on Peak 7 within BSR's Special Use Permit (SUP) area. The proposed project is consistent with goals and objectives identified in the BSR Master Development Plan (MDP) and is specifically referenced in an amendment that was accepted by the WRNF on March 15, 2019. For more information visit the project website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=55905>. A map of the proposed project area is also attached.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the project is to improve guest access to existing lift-served intermediate ski terrain on Peak 7 and to improve skier circulation between Peak 6 and Peak 8. The need for improved skier circulation between Peak 6 and Peak 8 is highlighted by the existing wait times and congestion at the Independence SuperChair at the base of Peak 7. The proposed Peak 7 lift strives to better serve intermediate skiers by providing improved access for repeat users on Peak 7 terrain, including several currently underutilized trails. It also improves access to Peak 8 by eliminating the need to ski down to the Independence SuperChair for guests traveling back from Peak 6. Specifically, this lift would capture guests traveling from Peak 6 and reduce skier traffic on the busy *Monte Cristo* trail.

The proposed Peak 7 Lift is intended to improve skier circulation patterns; it is not intended or anticipated to increase peak day visitation.

PROPOSED ACTION

To provide improved access to intermediate terrain, as well as provide a recreation experience consistent with guest expectations, the proposed action includes installation of a new lift on Peak 7 between the Independence SuperChair and the Zendo Lift (refer to the attached map for details). The proposed lift would be a detachable chairlift with a design capacity of 2,400 people per hour.

The top terminal of this lift would be positioned near the top terminal of Independence SuperChair and Pioneer Crossing restaurant; the bottom terminal would be positioned near the *Monte Cristo* trail just below the Zendo Lift. Construction and maintenance access for the top terminal would be provided by existing access roads, with a short spur access road to be constructed within the top terminal grading footprint. Construction and maintenance access to the proposed bottom terminal would follow a proposed access route that departs from an existing road along the *Lincoln Meadows* trail. A powerline would also be installed within this route to provide power to the proposed lift. Vegetation removal would be required for the construction of



the lift terminals and for the lift corridor in areas where it passes through tree stands. The proposed action has been designed to avoid impacts to wetlands; wetland surveys were conducted in July 2019 and wetlands were identified and flagged on the ground in the project area.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Based on resource information gathered to date, I believe this project falls within a Forest Service category of actions under 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 220 that may be excluded from documentation in either an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement, and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude its use. Scoping comments along with a complete resource analysis, will determine whether this project can be categorically excluded. The proposed project is consistent with category 36 CFR § 220.6(e)(3): *"Approval, modification or continuation of minor special uses of National Forest System lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land."*

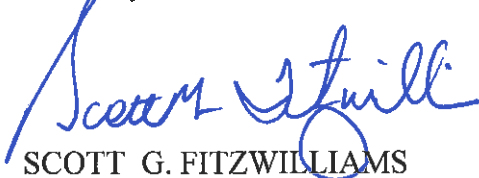
HOW TO COMMENT AND TIMEFRAME

This comment period is intended to provide those interested in or affected by this proposal an opportunity to comment on the proposed action before the responsible official makes a decision.

If you wish to comment, please submit your written, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action by Sunday, August 18, 2019. Please reference *Breckenridge Ski Resort 2019 Peak 7 Lift Project*. Written comments must be submitted to: Scott Fitzwilliams, Forest Supervisor, c/o Sam Massman, Dillon Ranger District, PO Box 620, 680 Blue River Parkway, Silverthorne, CO 80498-0620. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments including attachments can be submitted to: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=55905>.

Persons commenting should include: 1) name, address, telephone number, organization represented, if any; 2) name of the proposal on which the comment is being submitted; and 3) specific facts and supporting reasons for me to consider. Copies of the decision document will be sent to those people who have submitted comments and to those who request a copy. For more information about the project, contact Forest Service project manager Sam Massman at (970) 262-3484. Thank you for your interest in the management of your public lands. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



SCOTT G. FITZWILLIAMS
Forest Supervisor