



File Code: 1950

Date: May 21, 2012

Dear Reader:

This letter is to inform you that the *Mt. Bachelor Ski Area Improvements Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* has been completed and is now available for review and comment. This letter provides a brief summary of the project, information on the official 45-day public comment period, and instructions on how to obtain a copy of the DEIS and submit comments.

The Bend-Ft. Rock Ranger District, Deschutes National Forest (DNF) received a proposal from Mt. Bachelor, Inc., operators of Mt. Bachelor ski resort, requesting authorization to implement improvements included in their recently revised master development plan (MDP). The MDP documents analysis of current conditions at the resort and, based on that analysis, outlines anticipated development and management of the resort over the next 10 years. The proposed improvements are intended to enhance the winter and summer recreational opportunities available at the resort and on the DNF. They can be summarized as follows:

Eastside Pod:

- Developing the new Eastside Express lift and associated trails.
- Constructing a new, lower-elevation catchline delivering skiers to the Eastside Express lower terminal.
- Enhancing tree skiing opportunities between Eastside pod ski trails and between the existing and proposed catchlines.
- Closing Snowmobile Trail No. 40 to snowmobile use.

Sunrise Area:

- Replacing the Rainbow lift in a shortened alignment with a detachable quad lift.
- Replacing the Sunrise Express lift with a six-pack detachable lift.
- Developing the Sunrise Learning Center and Kids Adventure Zone.
- Improving Sunrise base area skier services, including a new lodge, parking lot, and access road.
- Constructing a new culinary water reservoir to provide adequate storage for the new lodge and associated facilities.
- Doubling the capacity of the existing Sunrise base area wastewater treatment system, particularly the drain field.
- Installing a vaulted restroom facility near the base of Skyliner Express.

West Village Area:

- Shortening the Red Chair.
- Constructing the Alpine Training Center.
- Adding coverage to the snowmaking system.
- Removing outdated West Village buildings and expanding the West Village Lodge.



- Moving the tubing hill across the parking lot to the “Old Maid” area.
- Developing a new employee/overflow parking lot.
- Constructing a biomass co-generation facility to provide electrical power and steam heat.

Nordic Center:

- Making minor improvements to the Nordic Center trail network.
- Refurbishing Bob’s Bungalow.

Summer Activities in the Pine Marten Area:

- Developing new hiking trails.
- Creating a lift-served, downhill mountain bike park.
- Setting up a canopy tour zipline course.
- Installing a rock climbing structure.

All the proposed improvements would be within Mt. Bachelor’s current SUP boundary. No expansion beyond that boundary is proposed.

Mt. Bachelor is located near Bend, Oregon, in Deschutes County, T18S, R9E, Sections 17 – 33. The ski resort operates under a special use permit (SUP) issued by the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) and administered by the DNF. The DNF has prepared this DEIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Forest Service regulations regarding its implementation.

**Alternatives Considered**

NEPA requires that EISs address the alternative of no action to provide a baseline for comparing the effects of the Proposed Action and action alternatives. In this case, the No-Action Alternative would maintain current conditions at the resort with the exception of several previously approved projects that have not yet been completed, most notably removal of the sprung steel administration building in the West Village parking lot and construction of a new two-story administration building.

Following scoping of the Proposed Action, the DNF interdisciplinary team developed an action alternative to address a concern raised during public scoping regarding impacts on Potential Wilderness Area (PWA) within and adjacent to the ski area boundary. The project of concern was the proposed lower catchline which would be built below the existing catchline, from the southern end of the SUP area back to the base of the Eastside Express chairlift. Under Alternative A, this catchline would not be authorized, nor would proposed selective tree removal to improve tree skiing between the existing and proposed catchlines.

The DEIS describes the full range of effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives in detail. You will find a copy of the DEIS on the Forest Service Website at:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa\\_project\\_exp.php?project=35863](http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=35863)

If you prefer a hardcopy of the document, please contact Amy Tinderholt at (541) 383-4708.

**Opportunity to Comment**

A Notice of Availability for the 45-day public comment period for this project is expected to be placed in the [Federal Register](#) on May 25, 2012. The 45-day comment period will begin on the date of publication of this notice. Do not rely on any other source for the beginning date of the comment period. A legal notice will be published in *The Bulletin*, the newspaper of record in Bend, OR, following publication of the Notice of Availability.

Comments should be addressed to Peggy Fisher, District Ranger (Acting), Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District, 63095 Deschutes Market Road, Bend, Oregon, 97701.

Comments can also be faxed to (541) 383-4700, sent electronically to [comments-pacificnorthwest-deschutes-bend-ftrock@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificnorthwest-deschutes-bend-ftrock@fs.fed.us), or hand delivered to 63095 Deschutes Market Road, Bend, Oregon between 7:45 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

For e-mail submission, the comments must be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx), rich text format (.rtf), or portable document format (.pdf) only. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, verification of identity will be required. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed above, or in formats other than those listed, or containing viruses, will be rejected. It is the responsibility of the commenter to confirm receipt of comments submitted by electronic mail. Please enter "Mt. Bachelor Project DEIS Comments" into the subject line of your e-mail.

Comments, including attachments, must be postmarked or delivered within 45 days of the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register, in order to be eligible to appeal. The publication date in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the time for comment. Those wishing to comment on this project should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Only those who submit timely and substantive comments will have eligibility to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 215.6.

Anyone wishing to obtain additional information on the project or to provide comments over the phone should contact Amy Tinderholt, Project Leader at (541) 383-4708.

Sincerely,

/s/ Brant Petersen  
BRANT PETERSEN  
Deputy District Ranger