

# Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Crystal Mountain Master Development Plan, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Pierce County, Washington

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Forest Service, USDA, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for Crystal Mountain's proposal to update its Master Development Plan. The proposed development includes the replacement and addition of chairlifts and surface lifts; construction of an aerial tram; expansion of the snowmaking system; as well as the addition and expansion of parking areas, day lodges, overnight lodging and other related facilities, and utilities to support new ski and other recreation opportunities. The proposed action also includes watershed restoration projects that have been identified in the watershed.

The proposed action would increase the year-round recreational opportunities within the existing Special Use Permit Boundary (4,350 acres). Implementation of the proposed Master Development Plan would increase the skiers-at-one-time (SAOT) capacity from 7,150 to 10,990. If implemented, the resulting persons-at-one-time (PAOT) capacity of the resort would increase from 7,865 to 12,090.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of this analysis should be in writing and postmarked by January 15, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Daniel T. Harkenrider, Acting Forest Supervisor, 21905 64th Avenue West, Mountlake Terrace, Washington 98043, Attention: Crystal Mountain Master Plan.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Larry Donovan, Winter Sports Specialist, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie

National Forest Supervisor's Office, 21905 64th Avenue West, Mountlake Terrace, Washington 98043-2278. Phone: (425) 744-3403. Internet: l.donovan/r6pnw\_mbs@fs.fed.us.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Crystal Mountain has been operating under a Special Use Permit from the USDA Forest Service since it opened for business in 1962. Presently, alpine skiing/snowboarding and other four-season resort activities are provided to the public through a Special Use Permit administered by the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. The current Special Use Permit includes a requirement that an updated Master Development Plan be prepared, as most projects identified in the existing (1983) Master Development Plan have been developed.

The purpose (objective) of this project is an updated Master Plan for long range (10-15) years management and development of the Crystal Mountain Ski Area. The goal of the Master Plan will be to ensure the long-term economic viability of Crystal Mountain; maintain the competitive position of Crystal Mountain with other ski areas in the Puget Sound Basin; maintain and restore a healthy ecosystem; and be consistent with the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Plan.

The proposed action is the submitted 1998 Master Development Plan proposal. It includes: replacing three existing chair lifts; constructing seven new chair lifts, two new surface lifts, and an aerial tram, resulting in an additional of 265.8 acres of lift-served ski terrain. The tram provide improved four-season public access to the summit of Crystal Mountain. Also proposed: an expanded snowmaking system (from 30 acres of coverage to 249 acres); and increased night skiing (from 65 to 175 acres). The proposed action also includes the addition of 57,000 square feet of support facilities, including two on-mountain restaurants. Expansion of the existing Alpine Inn and construction of a new hotel would provide public lodging for an additional 690 overnight visitors. An additional base area (Bullion Basin) is proposed for development in a portion of the existing Parking Lot B. Overall parking would be expanded by 11-12 acres. New employee housing facilities are proposed, serving 285 employees. A new sewage treatment facility is also

proposed; it would serve the Crystal Mountain ski area as well as other Forest Service Special Use Permit areas and private development in the watershed. In order to meet the increased snowmaking and domestic water consumption needs, several wells would be developed. The proposed action also includes watershed restoration projects as identified in the Silver Creek Watershed Condition Assessment. Implementation could begin in the summer of 2000 and would continue for approximately 10-15 years.

The site-specific environmental analysis provided by the Crystal Mountain Master Development Plan EIS will assist the Forest Supervisor in determining which improvements are needed to meet the goals and objectives, as stated above.

An environmental document will be produced which will display alternatives considered, including (1) no action, and (2) the proposed action. Three additional alternatives have been tentatively identified: (3) reduced expansion into the East Peak area; (4) no development in the North Country, South Country and East Peak Areas; and (5) reduced disturbance to riparian reserves. The EIS will analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the alternatives. Past, present, and projected activities on both private and National Forest System lands will be considered. The EIS will disclose the effects of site-specific mitigation.

*Comments from the public will be used to:*

- Identify potential issues.
- Identify major issues to be analyzed in depth.
- Eliminate minor issues or those that have been covered by a previous environmental analysis, such as the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie Land and Resource Management Plan.
- Identify alternatives to the proposed action.
- Identify potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives.

*Issues Identified as the result of internal scoping include:*

- Consistency with the Forest Plan/Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives;
- Maintenance of Visual Quality Objectives in Mount Rainier National Park and along the Pacific Crest Trail;
- Transportation impacts to Highway 410 and Crystal Mountain Boulevard;

- Increased access to "Back Country" terrain;
- Maintenance of snags, large downed wood and old growth habitat; and
- Maintenance of habitat for Threatened & Endangered, Sensitive and Survey & Manage species.

Scoping and public involvement are continuing. An initial scoping letter will be mailed on November 19, 1998. Two public scoping meetings will be held: December 8, 1998, from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM, at the Seattle Sea-Tac Marriot Hotel, 3201 South 176th Street, Seattle, WA 98189; and December 9, 1998, from 5:30 PM - 9:00 PM at the Enumclaw Senior High School cafeteria, 226 Semanski South, Enumclaw, WA 98022. The information and comments received will be used in preparation of the draft EIS.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 and 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within (30) days.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed in April 1999. Following release of the draft EIS, there will be a public comment period of at least 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes that it is important to give reviewers notice at this early stage of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of the draft EIS must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v.*

*NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIS may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 45-day comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the EIS. (Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.)

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in November 1999. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making the decision EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making the decision regarding this proposal. The lead agency is the Forest Service. The Forest Supervisor of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest is the responsible official. The responsible official will document the decision and the reasons for the decision in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service appeal regulations 36 CFR Parts 215 or 251.

Dated: November 13, 1998.

**Dennis E. Bschor,**

*Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 98-31906 Filed 11-30-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Clean State Ecosystem Management Project, Nez Perce National Forest, Idaho County, Idaho

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Revised Notice of Intent.

**AUTHORIZATION:** 40 CFR 1508.22.

**SUMMARY:** The Forest Service published a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the Clean State Ecosystem Management Project in March 6, 1997 in the Federal Register (Vol. 62, No. 44, Page 10253-10254). Forest Service Policy mandates that a revised notice of intent (NOI) be filed when there is a major change in the information shown in the notice of intent. For the Clean State Ecosystem Management Project, there are two major changes:

*1. A delay of more than 6 months in filing either a draft for final EIS*

◆ The draft impact statement is anticipated to be done by May of 1999 with the final EIS to be published in July 1999. This will be a 12 month delay of the draft and final EIS from the original notice of intent.

*2. A change in the proposed action or the decision to be made.*

◆ The following actions have been removed from the Clean State Ecosystem Management Project proposed action:

◆ Modify existing fish structure in Slate Creek;

◆ Develop and enhance dispersed recreation sites; and

◆ Provide interpretive sites for the public.

**DATES:** Written comments and suggestions should be received by **Federal Register** to receive timely consideration in the preparation of the draft EIS.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments and suggestions, request for maps, or request to be placed on the mailing list to Jack Carlson, District Ranger, Salmon River Ranger District, Nez Perce National Forest, HC 01, Box 70, Whitebird, Idaho, 83554 or by e-mail at: cseis/r1\_nezperce@fs.fed.us

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Mike McGee or Marsha Hollander, Salmon River Ranger District, HC 01, Box 70, Whitebird, Idaho 83554. Phone (208) 839-2211 or by e-mail at: cseis/r1\_nezperce@fs.fed.us