

INTRODUCTION

This document represents the Biological Assessment (BA) for the installation of an additional snowmaking system on Peak 7 at Breckenridge Ski Area (BSA) on the Dillon Ranger District, White River National Forest. This document incorporates by reference other BAs, BEs, and MIS reports in the BSA project file, including scientific nomenclature.

Consultation on Canada Lynx was not done at the time of the original decision on Breckenridge Ski Area snowmaking project since lynx had not yet been proposed or listed when that decision on snowmaking was made. To our knowledge and records this project was not specifically considered as part of the ski area ongoing operations consultation in 2000 and has not been analyzed in any previous consultation documents.

The project was originally proposed as part of the Breckenridge Ski Area Snowmaking Enhancement project and 177 acres of snowmaking for Peak 7 was approved in 1994 with formal consultation on Colorado Endangered Fish for the water depletions associated with the snow making. It is not known if this BA addressed Canada lynx but it likely did not since the lynx was not listed or proposed at that time. In a BA dated July 1998 for the Peaks 7 and 9 Facilities Improvement project the snowmaking on Peak 7 was mentioned but there was no clear indication in the analysis that effects of the installation of the snowmaking infrastructure was analyzed in the BA. The determination in that BA is may effect but not likely to jeopardize Canada lynx. In May of 2000 a Supplemental BA for the Peaks 7 and 9 Facilities Improvement project was done to update the 1998 BA after the lynx was listed. Again the proposed action seemed to focus on the trail clearing in Peak 7 and mentions snowmaking on Peak 7 and the water depletions but the effect on lynx of installing snowmaking infrastructure is not clearly defined and not analyzed. The determination in the Supplemental BA is may effect but not likely to adversely effect.

Since the previous consultations do not clearly document the effects of the installation of the snow making infrastructure, a new BA needs to be prepared for this project.

An updated list of federally threatened (FT), endangered (FE), proposed, and candidate species that occur on the Dillon Ranger District, White River National Forest (WRNF) was received from the USFWS on 03/10/2008 through the streamlining process.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project is to install approximately 17,000 feet of snowmaking pipeline and associated hydrants and guns. The installation would be on Pioneer and Angels Rest Trails on Peak 7. Map 1 shows the project. The water and air pipelines will be up to 12 inch diameter pipes and will be buried in trenches 6 feet deep. The work will progress in sections of approximately 500 feet at a time where the trench is opened and the pipes laid and then covered. Hydrant and gun installation will follow after pipe line installation. Installation will occur starting in June and will be done by fall. Work will occur during daylight hours.

The snowmaking lines will be placed in the existing ski runs or along existing roads. Approximately 20 trees would need to be removed from the block house locations to accommodate the structures and pipelines from the structures. These would be several small trees under 5 inch DBH and about 7 large