

Brian Head 2a

Environmental Assessment: Brian Head Resort Master Development Plan Amendment

proposed Pioneer Cabin base facilities would probably employ 10 to 20 local and regional construction people for all or part of one construction season. (Homberger 2002.)

It is estimated that operation and maintenance of the expanded on-mountain facilities would require full-time, seasonal employment of one groomer, one lift mechanic, seven lift operators, and three ski patrolmen. The base facilities would likely employ the equivalent of four full-time, seasonal people to cook and serve food and perform other service and maintenance functions. This work could be split among part-time, seasonal positions. Other labor requirements could probably be met by the existing resort staff. (Brian Head Resort 2002d.)

Some minor increases in public costs for public services and utilities would likely result from implementation of the proposed action, primarily in the area of road maintenance. It is likely that the access road to the Pioneer Cabin base from Highway 143 would be brought up to county standards then be maintained by the county. This would include snow removal. As the base area would be on unincorporated county land, services and utilities including power, water, and sewer would be the resort's responsibility.

Growth Inducement

Brian Head Resort owns a 1,600-acre parcel of land surrounding the proposed Pioneer Cabin base area. Over the years, the resort has reportedly considered various concepts for development of the parcel, but none have progressed beyond the discussion stage. The resort's proposal to the Forest Service regarding the proposed action (Brian Head Resort 2000) outlines their current plans for development outside the context of the master development plan. These include completion of the next phases of the Trails at Navajo, planning for two parcels at Giant Steps zoned for high-density residential and commercial development, and a residential development tentatively called Paradise Ridge near Woodbridge. The proposal does not include any plans for development of the Steam Engine parcel beyond those comprised by the proposed action.

While there are no plans for development of this parcel, implementation of the proposed action would create the option for ski-in/ski-out realty development there. This would change the development potential of the parcel, making development more likely than under the no-action alternative. Brian Head Town has recognized the potential for development of this parcel, noting in the master plan that "Development of the 1,600 acres of ski company land north of town could, however, significantly increase [their estimate of a build-out population of 3,000 to 5,000 people based in 1995 inventory of platted lots]" (Bingham Engineering and Winston Associates 1995, p.9).

At least two factors would limit the likelihood that development of this parcel would be a likely indirect effect of the proposed action. First, as discussed above under Affected Environment, Housing and Skier Accommodation, there are currently an estimated 517 undeveloped lots in the incorporated area alone, and these would not be built out for 57 years at the current rate of housing starts. The Steam Engine Meadows development, which is adjacent to the resort-owned parcel, may be a good indicator of how any development of the resort's parcel might fare. As noted above, only four of 65 lots in this development have sold since it went on the market 5 years ago. The proposed action would provide Steam Engine Meadows residents access to and from the ski area without the use vehicles, which would likely make the development more desirable and reduce traffic at the resort.

Second, as discussed above under Affected Environment, Services and Utilities, water supply is a limiting factor in buildout of the currently platted lots. If the parcel were not annexed, county regulations would require

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Meadow, as noted below. Table 3-1 identifies the elements and the level of disturbance they would generate. Figure 4 shows the location of these elements.

	Acres on Public	Acres on Private	Type of Impact
Lifts	1	0.3	Excavation/grading at terminals and tower bases.
Ski Trails—Clearing	13	49	Tree removal from trail corridors.
Ski Trails—Stumping	43	59	Removal of above-ground stumps, no soil disturbance.
Ski Trails—Grading	0	5	Limited grading on private-land ski trails to reduce hazards and improve circulation.
Access Roads	1.2	3	Road construction.
Buildings/Parking Lots	0.02	3	Excavation/grading associated with construction.

Water Quantity

Construction of the proposed lifts would require ground disturbance to install the towers and terminals. Disturbance associated with the towers would be small, on the order of 100 square feet per tower. The terminals would require a larger disturbance area, up to 0.2 acres each depending on design requirements. The disturbance for the surface lift would be less. Surface runoff and erosion would increase on the disturbed areas during snowmelt and heavy precipitation events until vegetation becomes established. However, water yields on a larger scale are unlikely to change because live-tree clearing would not be required to install these lifts. The exception to this is the lower part of the Pioneer Cabin lift that would traverse mixed conifer forest, where a corridor approximately 2,400 feet long would be cleared. Implementation of mitigation measures for hydrology detailed in Appendix C of this document would minimize surface runoff and associated problems.

Ski trail construction in the Pioneer Cabin expansion area would require a reduced level of tree clearing since much of the area is already cleared due to the spruce beetle epidemic and salvage logging. Above-ground stumps would be removed from the ski trails using either a stump grinder mounted on a skidder or by flush cutting where the terrain is too steep for the equipment to operate. Either method would not result in ground disturbance. Grading would occur on approximately 5 acres of ski trails on private land to address terrain features that could interfere with the use of the trail by the intended skier ability level. Spruce beetle mortality in this area has already reduced the transpiration in the watershed, resulting in increased water yield. Although runoff could increase in disturbed areas prior to vegetation becoming reestablished, the overall water yield would not be expected to increase as a result of the trail construction since most of the spruce are already dead or removed. The exception to this would be the construction of ski trails below Munos Meadow in the mixed conifer forest. Because these trails would require tree clearing, water yield could increase.

Construction of the Pioneer Cabin parking lot, skier facilities building, and access road would increase the amount of impervious surface by approximately 3 acres. This would increase surface runoff during snowmelt or precipitation events. These facilities would be located above the stream system in Pioneer Cabin Meadow