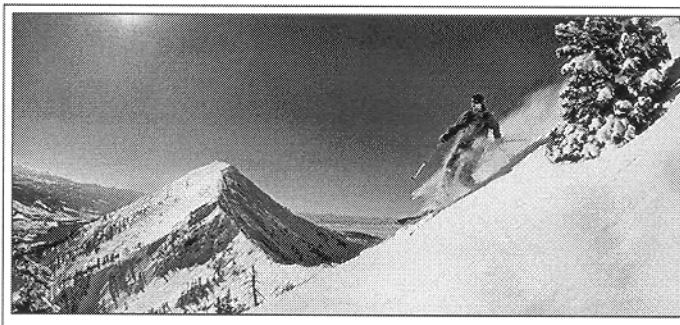




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## What's New!



### WHAT'S NEW?

#### Future Terrain Expansion

Bridger Bowl has begun preparations for a new lift in the Slushman's drainage as identified in Option 2 of our Final EIS. The new lift is illustrated on our Trail Map. This will add approximately 300 acres of new lift-served terrain, allowing for the first significant expansion of lift-served terrain since 1978. All skiers and riders should be advised that all future terrain as indicated on our map will remain out-of-bounds during the season. All terrain outside of our current ski area boundaries should be considered backcountry conditions and access is permitted through designated access gates only.

Bridger Bowl purchased a Peruvian double chair lift from Snowbird in 2006. We are currently reconditioning the lift (a 1976 Doppelmayr double chair) and are in Phase I installation which primarily involves burying 6,000 linear feet of power and communication line to the site of the new lift. We hope to also have concrete poured and the base terminal erected before winter. Phase II lift installation and project completion is scheduled for fall of 2008. This new lift will provide lift access to expert terrain only. The lift's vertical rise will be 1700 feet (400 feet more than Bridger Lift) and slope length will be about 3800 feet. We anticipate that the lift will terminate approximately 100 feet below the ridge line. If all goes as planned in 2008 we also hope to install a new lift to the North Meadow area to improve access to the North side of the mountain and provide some relief to the old Alpine lift.

#### Boundary Policy

Bridger Bowl will have the same boundary policy this season allowing day ticket and season pass holders to exit the mountain to access backcountry terrain. The Gallatin National Forest is providing access out of Bridger Bowl Ski area into backcountry terrain for recreational skiers and snowboarders. Backcountry access is limited to two gates: a south gate located near the top of Pierre's Knob Return Road and a north gate located near the top of North Meadows. Bridger Bowl recommends that anyone exiting the ski area have a very strong knowledge of backcountry

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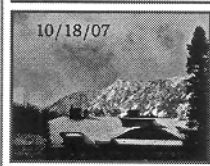
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BOZEMAN RANGER DISTRICT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 8, MONTANA OFFICE  
FEDERAL BUILDING, 10 West 15<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 3200  
HELENA, MONTANA 59626

JUN 14 2004

INFO	ACTION
— District Ranger	—
— Fire Mgmt Officer	—
— Asst FMO	—
— Con Ed	—
— Fisheries	—
— Rangelands	—
— Public Affairs	—
— Recreation	—
— Planning	—
— Training	—
— Forest Health	—
— Forest Health Dist	—
— Wildlife Biologist	—
— SSS	—
— Bus Dev	—
— Permitting	—
— Info Assistant	—
— Resource Clerk	—
— Forest Range Group	—
— Law Enforcement	—
— File/Library/Records/Other	—

Ref: 8MO

June 10, 2004

Ms. Nancy Hallstrom, EIS Coordinator  
Gallatin National Forest  
Bozeman Ranger District  
3710 Fallon Street, Suite C  
Bozeman, MT 59718

Re: CEQ 040187; Bridger Bowl Special Use Permit and  
Master Development Plan Supplemental DEIS

Dear Ms. Hallstrom:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region VIII Montana Office has reviewed the Bridger Bowl Special Use Permit and Master Development Plan Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). The EPA reviews EISs in accordance with its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Section 309 of the Clean Air Act directs EPA to review and comment in writing on the environmental impacts of any major federal agency action. EPA's comments include a rating of both the environmental impact of the proposed action and the adequacy of the NEPA document.

The EPA appreciates the effort of the Gallatin National Forest to prepare this SDEIS to respond to public comments on the April 1999 DEIS and present new information. We have questions, however, regarding Bridger Bowl's Comfortable Carrying Capacity (CCC) of 3,200 skiers that was reported in the SDEIS. The 1999 DEIS indicated that if parking and base lodge facilities were expanded, the resort capacity would increase to 4,500 skiers, however, this SDEIS reports that parking facilities have been upgraded and a new 35,629 ft<sup>2</sup> day lodge will be completed this year, and that some chairlift upgrades have occurred, however, no changes in ski area carrying capacity are shown between 1999 and 2004. Why is the CCC at Bridger Bowl still stated to be 3,200 skiers if many facility additions were added between 1999 and 2004? Use of appropriate capacity levels influences ski area utilization levels and need for expansion. It would be helpful if this were further explained.

Also, the SDEIS indicates that existing skier density at Bridger Bowl is well below "desired conditions" and is "uncrowded," and says there is a need to maintain these "uncrowded" conditions as skier visitation increases. Many ski areas across the nation have much more crowded conditions than Bridger Bowl. EPA is concerned that such a "need" or goal could set an unintended precedent for USFS permitted ski areas by effectively setting a new industry standard



## **EPA Comments on Bridger Bowl Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

### **BRIEF PROJECT OVERVIEW:**

The Bridger Bowl Ski Area is located in Bridger Canyon, approximately 15 miles northeast of Bozeman, Montana. Bridger Bowl, Inc, submitted a revised Master Development Plan (MDP) in 2002, and the Gallatin National Forest issued a new Special Use Permit (SUP) for operations within the existing boundary in November 2002. The Gallatin National Forest, Bozeman Ranger District, has prepared a Supplemental DEIS to present new information and respond to comments on the earlier DEIS that was distributed for public comment in April 1999. Bridger Bowl, Inc., a non-profit Montana enterprise currently owns 480 acres on the lower mountain and the SUP authorizes use of 1,042 acres of National Forest lands (1,122 acres by GIS). The study area includes the current SUP area; NF land proposed for SUP area expansion; and private lands, totaling 2,574 acres. The area presently includes eight lifts, 69 developed ski trails with 407 acres of developed ski terrain, and two day lodges with another lodge under construction and scheduled to open in 2004. The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the recreational experience at Bridger Bowl and address expected growth in skier visits over the 40 year duration of the SUP in a financially sound manner. Four alternatives, including no action, have been evaluated in the SDEIS.

Under Alternative 1, no action, there would be no change to the existing 1,042 acre SUP. The existing BBSA capacity is 3,200 skiers at one time with guest service capacity on 5,400 persons limited by wastewater treatment system. Development on private land is able to increase this to 4,500 skiers at one time.

Alternative 2 represents the proposed action detailed in a 2002 Bridger Bowl MDP submitted by the applicant. Under Alternative 2 guest service capacity would increase to 6,200 upon completion of the Limestone Chalet, and ski lift and terrain capacity would increase to 6,100 skiers. The Bridger Bowl SUP boundary would be expanded to the north by 274 acres in the Bradley Meadows area above the South Fork Brackett Creek, and to the south by 337 acres in the Slushman Creek drainage (including 101 acres of roadless), and by 45 acres to the southeast for avalanche control for a total SUP area of 1,778 acres by GIS. A total of 13 lifts would be operated (10 chairlifts and 3 surface tows), and ski terrain would increase by 96 acres for a total of 503 acres with 16 new trails for a total of 85 trails. Two lifts would be modified and six new lifts constructed and one lift removed. About 1.4 miles of new road would be built on NF lands and 0.4 miles of road on private lands for a total of 17.7 miles of road. Several Forest Plan amendments would be required.

Alternative 3 was developed by the Forest Service to reduce impacts to the Bridger IRA by eliminating development to the south in the Slushman Creek drainage, to avoid development in the roadless area. Under Alternative 3 guest service capacity would increase to 6,200, and ski lift and terrain capacity would increase for 5,600 skiers. The Bridger Bowl SUP boundary would

# Bridger Bowl 1



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Gallatin National Forest

Supervisor's Office  
10 East Babcock  
P.O. Box 130  
Bozeman, MT 59771

File Code: 1950/2720

Date: July 28, 2005

Route To: José Castro, District Ranger

Subject: Section 18 NEPA Review for the Bridger Bowl master Development Plan Approval and Special Use permit Authorization

To: File

I have completed my review of the request submitted by Bridger Bowl Inc. to provide an open boundary management policy in their annual operating plan as part of their authorized special use permit.

I concur with the findings made by the interdisciplinary team (IDT), that this change is not significant nor will it lead to the potential for environmental effects not considered in the January 2005 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In accordance with Section 18 of the Forest Service Handbook (FSH 1909.15) for implementing the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), I concluded that revision of the EIS is not necessary and that the changes to be made in implementation are within the scope of my original decision. The Annual Plan of Operations for the Special Use Permit issued to Bridger Bowl Inc. may be amended to reflect an open boundary policy.

## BACKGROUND:

The Gallatin National Forest prepared an EIS analyzing a proposal for Bridger Bowl Inc. to update its master development plan and expand the boundaries of its special use permit. The FEIS was issued in January 2005. Bridger Bowl currently has a closed boundary policy. The skiing customers are required to stay within the ski area boundary or risk losing their ski pass. The issue of opening the ski area boundary came up in the form of public comment on the expansion proposal. During the period the EIS was prepared, Bridger Bowl's General Manager and Board of Directors did not want to consider an open boundary policy any time in the foreseeable future. Therefore, additional backcountry skier traffic resulting from potential opening of ski area boundaries was not evaluated for direct, indirect or cumulative effects during the NEPA process for the ski area expansion proposal.

## CHANGED CONDITIONS:

Since the Record of Decision (ROD) was issued to allow expansion of the ski area, a new General Manager has been appointed, and a large turnover in the Board of Directors has occurred. The new manager, with support of the Board, has approached the Forest Service regarding opening the boundaries to allow Bridger Bowl skiers access to terrain on national forest system land (NFSL) outside the ski area boundary. The Forest Service supports an open boundary policy. The proposal currently being evaluated involves providing two access points, located at about mid-mountain, from the current or existing ski area boundary to the north and south.

