

## PRESS RELEASE ARCHIVE



### Copper Mountain Resort Opposes Alternatives D and E of White River National Forest Plan

**WHEN: 10/13/1999**

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Copper Mountain officials announced the resort's opposition to proposed Alternatives D and E of the White River National Forest Plan today. Lack of balance between environmental interests and recreational needs in both alternatives were cited as the resort's main reasons for opposition.

In mid-1997 the U.S. Forest Service approached all resort officials whose resort boundaries are within the White River National Forest. The resorts were instructed individually, and without communication with each other, to propose a 30-year plan that would, in a "perfect-world" scenario, identify all possible boundary expansions and potential uses over that time frame. The Forest Service combined the submitted recreational proposals with environmental desires submitted by local, state and national environmental groups and then inputted their own planning agenda, effectively creating six different scenarios, named Alternatives B, C, D, E, F and I.

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In light of Alternative D recently being put forth as the preferred alternative, and upon analyzing the cumulative nature of Alternative E, the resort does not support either plan as they effect our resort, the entire Ten Mile Drainage area and The White River National Forest," said Jim Spenst, vice president of operations for Copper. "Several environmental groups have suggested that Alternative E is our preferred alternative when in fact that could not be farther from the truth. Alternative E does not do an acceptable job of protecting the environment as it is excessively weighted toward recreational expansion. On the other side of the coin, Alternative D proposes no expansion whatsoever over a period of 15 years. In order to achieve sustainability of the Eco-system, as well as the economy, we feel that different segments of each of the six alternatives need to be combined into one comprehensive plan."

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Looking into the very distant future, Copper officials originally proposed a number of projects whose inception, due to environmental and economic considerations, are no longer foreseeable in the future. The resort is currently pursuing a significant reduction to the original plan that would allow for only the potential use of areas directly adjacent to Copper's existing permit boundary. If approved, this alteration will have to undergo the same environmental scrutiny required as any proposed plan before being formally submitted.

"As we have begun to grow, our plans and our focus have shifted," added Spenst. "Our world has changed so significantly in the last fifteen years that we must assume it will change even more over the next fifteen. Ideally, we envision a plan jointly constructed by the U.S. Forest Service, each resort, all environmental groups, Summit County officials, the local community and all other interested parties that would provide the delicate balance needed between environmental and recreational

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One project noted in Alternative E that is not being pursued by the resort suggests a development at the base of the Tucker Mountain Drainage located south of the resort's current permitted area. Although Copper is not pursuing this development due to environmental and economic considerations, resort officials do feel that an extension to the south and west of the resort's present permit boundary – Prescription 8.25 as categorized by the U.S. Forest Service – is desirable. “In the foreseeable future we have no desire for a base area to be developed in that area as identified in our submittal to the Forest Service 18 months ago,” said Spenst. “We have, however, been told by our guests that they want skiing and riding access in the Tucker Mountain Drainage and Jacque Basin areas, which are located adjacent to our current boundary. At the present time we have no intentions to request an extension of our permit, but we do believe that the public should have the opportunity in the future to ski and ride in those areas. If and when that time arrives, these areas will undergo the same environmental review required of any proposed land use.”

In addition to pursuing the option for additional acreage in Prescription 8.25, Copper plans to continue improving areas within its existing permit area that are concurrent with the ongoing Collaborative Front-Loaded Interagency Process (CFLIP). The CFLIP effort is a first of its kind project developed by the Forest Service to create more structured public coordination efforts for mountain resort projects that require multiple permits and approvals. The U.S. Forest Service chose Copper Mountain several months ago as the first to participate in this effort in part due to the resort's past initiatives aimed at developing quality communication with interested parties prior to finalizing their project proposals.

For more information on proposed Alternatives D and E of the White River National Forest Plan, call Carolyn Upton at (970) 946-2521. For more information on Copper Mountain Resort call (970) 968-2318.

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