

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region



R5-MB-104
January 2006

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Kirkwood Mountain Resort

2003 Mountain Master
Development Plan

Eldorado National Forest



Kirkwood 1

TERRAIN OVERVIEW

Kirkwood currently offers approximately 567 acres of defined,²⁴² skiable terrain throughout its NFS and private lands, and offers a *hike-to* vertical drop of more than 2,000 feet. Kirkwood's named trail network is comprised of 69 trails. Examples of naturally occurring alternative terrain include lift-served and hike-to bowls, gladed terrain, open faces, treed terrain, and sizeable collection of extreme terrain. In addition, several natural gullies in the lower elevations of the resort appeal to a wide spectrum of guests (e.g., Snowsnake Gully and Hully Gully). While the majority of "The Cirque" is presently closed to the public, portions of it are occasionally utilized to host sanctioned, extreme skiing and snowboarding competitions.

The backside – also known as the Emigrant Valley – is defined by Caples Crest, Thimble Peak (elevation 9,805 feet), Covered Wagon Peak (elevation 9,565 feet), and Fawn Ridge. The backside is bounded to the east and to the north by the Mokelumne Wilderness Area.

Kirkwood maintains a terrain park served by the Caples Crest lift (Chair 2), a half pipe served by Solitude (Chair 5), and race arenas, which are set up periodically on terrain serviced by chairs 2, 5 and 11.

A terrain distribution analysis completed for Kirkwood²⁴³ indicates that the ski area falls short in beginner, intermediate, advanced intermediate and expert terrain as compared to industry norms for their regional marketplace.

Terrain Density Analysis

In order to achieve a balanced recreational experience, the uphill (lift) capacity of a ski area should be balanced with its downhill (terrain) capacity. As the difficulty of the terrain increases, the acceptable skier density (i.e., skiers per acre) decreases. Existing terrain densities are provided in Table 3G-2.²⁴⁴ Kirkwood has a resort-wide density index of 55 percent (with up to 100 percent being acceptable). Snowkirk (Chair 1) and Hole 'N' Wall (Chair 7) have the highest densities. Low trail densities in the remainder of the lift pods are indications that trail crowding is not a problem at Kirkwood.

²⁴² This does not account for a substantial amount of "off-piste" terrain throughout the ski area, including natural gladed tree skiing, open bowls, and above tree-line skiing. While much of this off-piste terrain is accessible from the lift network, hiking is required to reach some areas.

²⁴³ SE Group, 2003: p. IV-25

²⁴⁴ This trail density analysis only considers the acreage associated with Kirkwood's named trail network (i.e., off-piste acreage is not accounted for).

Kirkwood 1

Covered Wagon Pod

The Covered Wagon surface lift would provide approximately 225 feet of elevation gain to the top of Covered Wagon Peak once guests exit the top terminal of Chair 4. Intermediate through advanced (tree skiing) terrain could be accessed from this lift. Due to its remote location, the Covered Wagon surface lift would be powered with a propane generator. Snow fencing is proposed at strategic locations along this lift's alignment.

Utilization of trails D1, D2, and D3 would require no vegetation removal or ground disturbance, as terrain accessible via the Covered Wagon surface lift is composed of natural glades and open areas. However, the lift alignment would require limited tree removal and/or grading (possibly hand picking of rocks), as well as the installation of snow fencing. (Due to this installation's exposure to wind and sun, three sections of snow fencing would be installed parallel to the lift.)

Red Cliffs Pod

The Red Cliffs surface lift would provide approximately 405 feet of elevation gain, offering a range of opportunities for Kirkwood's guests. Proposed trails E1 through E8 are composed of novice, advanced-intermediate, expert and extreme terrain. Although some beginner and intermediate terrain could be accessed from the proposed Red Cliffs surface lift, it would primarily provide access to off-piste, expert-level terrain that is not lift-served and therefore utilized by only a minute percentage of Kirkwood's guests. Similar to the Look Out Vista and Covered Wagon pods, no formal trail development is proposed for the Red Cliffs pod. Limited tree removal and terrain leveling would be required for the construction of this lift, as well as for beginner trail E2. Installation of snow fencing would be required near the proposed bend in the lift. Tower and terminal footing locations would be accessed over-the-snow for excavation and concrete would be flown to the site with the exception of the bottom terminal, which can be accessed from an existing road.

Upgraded/Realigned Chairlifts and Terrain Improvements

Upgrades are proposed for existing lift installations that occur either entirely or partially on NFS lands, including: Flying Carpet (Chair 2), Iron Horse (Chair 3), Sunrise (Chair 4), Solitude (Chair 5), Wagon Wheel (Chair 10), and the Reut (Chair 11). In addition, two surface lifts that are located entirely on private lands would be relocated to accommodate private land construction.³⁰ Surface Tow 8 would be relocated near the existing bottom terminal of the Wagon Wheel (Chair 10), and Surface Tow 12 would be relocated to the opposite side of the Bunny Lift (Chair 9).

Chairs 2 and 3

Flying Carpet (Chair 2) and Iron Horse (Chair 3) would remain in their same configurations (i.e., top and bottom terminal locations do not change) and would be

³⁰ Proposals that occur entirely on private land are not subject to Forest Service approval but will nonetheless be analyzed cumulatively in this document.



KIRKWOOD
MOUNTAIN
REALTY

Love it now and forever



WHY KIRKWOOD

PROPERTIES

WHAT'S NEXT

• Press Releases

Mountain Map

YOUR COMMUNITY

THE TEAM

KEEP ME POSTED

HOME



PALISADES
Real Estate Group

Featured Property

The rarest of opportunities in a place so pristine, so isolated from everyday life is pure mountain living and the beauty of Kirkwood.

>>> more

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winter 2006-07

Contact:

Tracy Owen Chapman
Weidinger Public Relations
775.588.2412

KIRKWOOD'S MOUNTAIN MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN CALLS FOR SIGNIFICANT MOUNTAIN IMPROVEMENTS OVER NEXT SEVERAL YEARS

(Kirkwood Mountain Resort, Kirkwood, Calif.) Kirkwood Mountain Resort, long regarded as one of the premier mountain experiences on the continent and home of America's deepest snow, is in the process of completing a new Mountain Master Development Plan (MMDP) that will, over the next decade, provide lift access to hundreds of acres of currently "hike-to" terrain and reduce travel time from the front side to the back side of the resort's 2,300 acres by more than 70%.

The MMDP includes installation of five new lifts and upgrades to six existing lifts, increases lift capacity from the Timber Creek area to the Mountain Village and incorporates an on-mountain restaurant at the top of Caples Crest. The plan has been submitted to the United States Forest Service for review.

"The resort's focus over the past few years has been to further develop the Village core, with the addition of the Timber Ridge Town-homes and Meadow Stone Lodge, the Village Ice Skating Rink, and the completion of phase one of our Swim Complex," stated Dave Likins, resort CEO. "We hope to move forward with significant mountain improvements over the next several years".

Four objectives have been laid out in the MMDP:

- o Provide lift service to several hundred acres of "hike to" terrain within existing permit boundary
- o Improve access from one side of the mountain to the other
- o Add lift capacity from Timber Creek base area
- o Provide an on-mountain dining facility

These objectives will be met as follows:

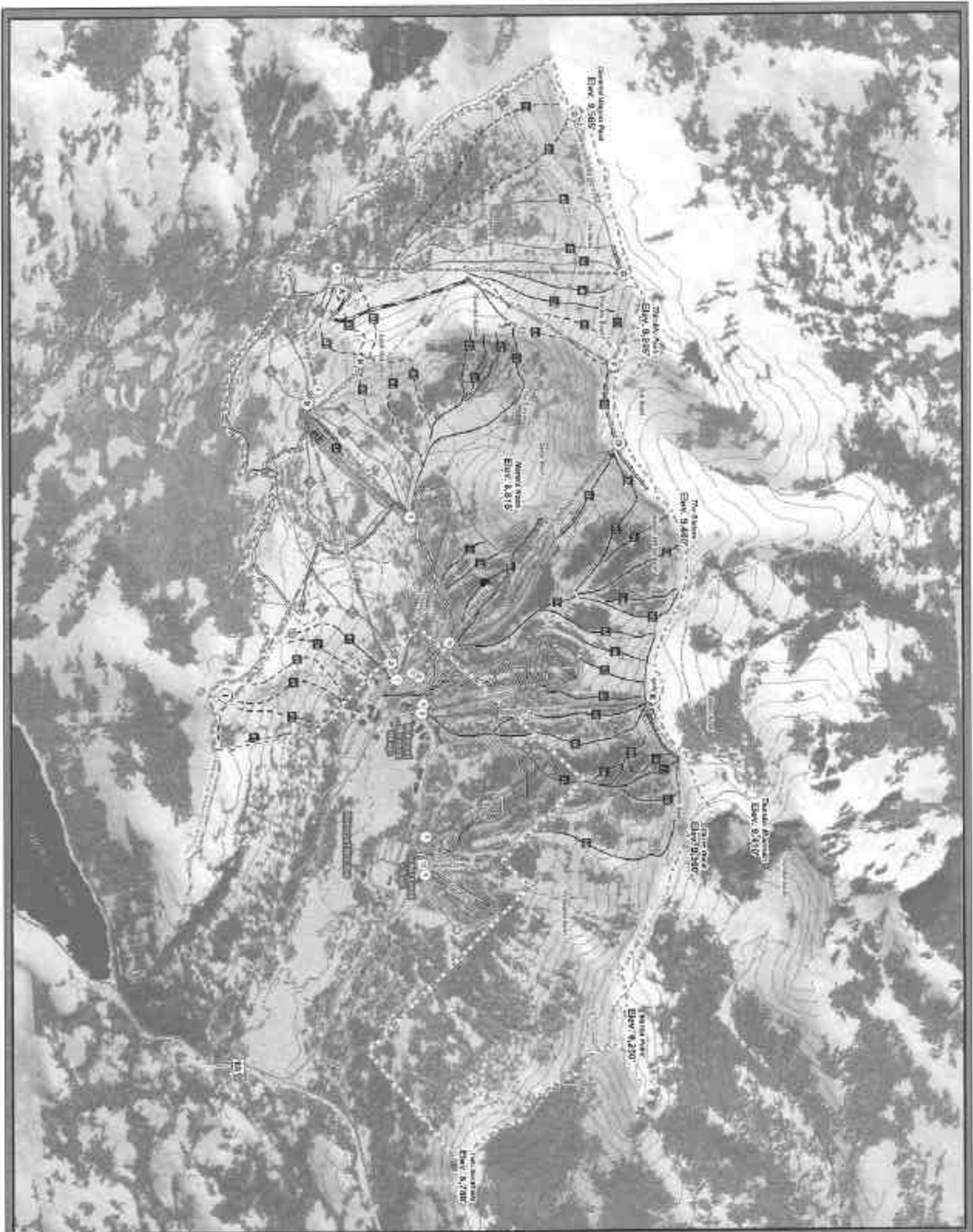
Increase Lift Served Terrain. Five new lifts will be installed, including two chairlifts and three surface tows. A high capacity chairlift will provide access to the top of Thimble Peak ("99 Steps"); surface tows will provide access to Covered Wagon Peak, Lookout Vista and Red Cliffs. A new high-speed lift, Caples Crest Express, will provide direct access from the Village to Emigrant Basin as well as the proposed Caples Crest Restaurant.

On-Mountain Dining Facility. A scenic sit-down restaurant is proposed for the top of Caples Crest overlooking Caples Lake and surrounding mountain peaks.

"We've consistently been ranked among the top resorts in the nation for snow quality, terrain and challenge; with the added amenities in our Mountain Village and the planned on-mountain improvements, we feel that our product will be comparable to many of the top ranking resorts among the nation in all categories," stated Likins.

For more information on real estate options at Kirkwood, call 888-KWD-PROP (593-7767) and visit www.livekirkwood.com.

Kirkwood Mountain Resort is a secluded year-round alpine resort community located 35 minutes





KIRKWOOD
KIRKWOOD MOUNTAIN
RESORT

FIGURE 2 - 2

Alternative 2 - Proposed Action

<p>Site Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Parking Ski Lift Ski Storage Ski Rental Ski School Ski Shop Ski Repair Ski Maintenance Ski Wash Ski Storage Ski Rental Ski School Ski Shop Ski Repair Ski Maintenance Ski Wash 	<p>Trails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ski Run Ski Lift Ski Storage Ski Rental Ski School Ski Shop Ski Repair Ski Maintenance Ski Wash 	<p>Resort Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ski Run Ski Lift Ski Storage Ski Rental Ski School Ski Shop Ski Repair Ski Maintenance Ski Wash 	<p>Special Use Permit Boundary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ski Run Ski Lift Ski Storage Ski Rental Ski School Ski Shop Ski Repair Ski Maintenance Ski Wash 	<p>Resort Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Spruce Knob B) Golden Giant Summit C) Cannonville Summit D) Cannonville Summit E) Cannonville Summit F) Cannonville Summit G) Cannonville Summit H) Cannonville Summit I) Cannonville Summit J) Cannonville Summit K) Cannonville Summit L) Cannonville Summit M) Cannonville Summit N) Cannonville Summit O) Cannonville Summit P) Cannonville Summit Q) Cannonville Summit R) Cannonville Summit S) Cannonville Summit T) Cannonville Summit U) Cannonville Summit V) Cannonville Summit W) Cannonville Summit X) Cannonville Summit Y) Cannonville Summit Z) Cannonville Summit
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Scale: 1" = 100'

North Arrow


Kirkwood 1

Kirkwood 1

November 20, 2005

Notice of Proposed Action

Project Description: Guided Backcountry Alpine Touring at Kirkwood Mountain Resort



Proposed Action #1: Kirkwood Mountain Resort is proposing guided skiing/riding in the Thunder Bowl area, and Avalanche Bowl area, adjacent to their permitted area. The areas would be accessed from the top of Chair 6, Cornice Express. There will be up to 8 guests and no less than 2 guides. Guides and guests will ride the Cornice Express chair to the top of the ridge and hike/ski over to the top of Thunder Bowl or Avalanche Bowl. They will ski down and hike back up and then ski down into the ski resort to finish the tour/lesson.

Purpose and Need: This will be another experience offered through the Expedition Kirkwood program. The focus will be on expanding the visitors' avalanche and avoidance awareness and off piste skiing experiences. The guides will be certified patrollers and will require proper equipment (avalanche transceiver, shovel, probes, first aid gear, etc...). There will be no ground disturbance with this proposed activity and will be offered only during the winter season when there is adequate snowpack and weather permitting. See attachment A for a map of the area.

Proposed Action #2: Kirkwood Mountain Resort is proposing guided snowcat accessed skiing/riding in the Martin Point and Two Sentinels areas. There will be up to 10 guests and no less than 2 guides.

Purpose and Need: Kirkwood's current snowcat access guided skiing area in the Red Cliffs is very popular. However, it doesn't have the best aspect for optimum snow quality (it faces west) and it is a relatively small area that gets skied out quickly.

The area under Martin Point and Two Sentinels is lightly used as it is accessed only by hiking. This area is much larger and has better snow quality than Red Cliffs and would be an excellent area for guided snowcat skiing. The snowcat machine would create a snow road to access the ridge at the top. The snow road would be an approximately 20 minute trip up the mountain for guests to ski/ride 1,200-1,400 vertical feet down to the Timber Creek Lodge area. Up to 10 guests could be accommodated each trip. No trees or ground disturbance will be required for this proposal. This project area is completely within Kirkwood's permitted area boundary. See attachment B for a map of the area.