

Lost Trail 4b

- Boreal Owl

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects Common To All Action Alternatives

Boreal owl habitat could be affected by clearing ski runs in either Alternatives A or B. Owls have been heard singing from the LTSA parking lot from the vicinity of the old growth stand where proposed Ski Run "B" would be cleared. Ski Run "B" parallels the edge of the stand, and actually affects about seven acres of the 100+ acre stand. Several other stands proximate to the run are also old growth habitat. Overall, Alternative A would reduce old growth habitat by about 23 acres to about 16 percent of the analysis area, and Alternative B would reduce old growth by about 26 acres to 15 percent of the analysis area. Old growth retained therefore meets Forest Plan standards and should be sufficient to retain populations of boreal owls and other old growth associated species.

A greater affect of development on boreal owls could be the disturbance caused by skiers in proximity of nesting sites. The effects of disturbance may be minimized by the fact that boreal owls are very nocturnal and no night skiing is proposed. Boreal Owls have used nest boxes within hearing distance of the parking lot. The mitigation for loss of old growth habitat, placing of five nesting boxes along Ski Run "B" (see Table 2-3), should replace potential nest sites that could be lost when runs are cleared.

The implementation of either of the proposed alternatives would have no known adverse cumulative effect on global, regional or local populations of boreal owls.

Alternative C (No Action)

In the short term, no changes in boreal owl habitat would occur if no action is taken. However, in the longer term there could be dramatic changes in amount and distribution of old growth habitat due to stand replacement or stand killing fires. Old growth associates such as boreal owls would be displaced by major fires, but other species adapted to early seral stages of vegetation would be favored.

- Lynx

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects Common To All Action Alternatives

No lynx have been seen in the analysis area, and trapping records indicate none have been taken in the recent past. The development of ski runs would not improve lynx habitat in either the long nor short term. The potential for the area to support lynx is directly affected by the potential for snowshoe hares. The Saddle Mountain Burn has the sapling/pole stands usually associated with good snowshoe hare habitat. Portions of the clearing for the Saddle Mountain lift and runs associated with it will create linear openings through suitable habitat for hares. Since only a small portion of the Saddle Mountain Burn will be affected, the effect on snowshoe hares and therefore lynx will be minor. Timber harvest activity or major fires outside the ski area development but within the analysis area could result in immature stands of trees that would be good snowshoe hare habitat and therefore could support lynx. Sufficient old growth habitat that could be used for denning habitat would be retained in both Alternatives A and B.