

**DECISION NOTICE
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR
LOST TRAIL CHAIR 5**

I. DECISION SUMMARY

An Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Lost Trail Chair 5 Project was released for public review and comment in April 2002. After careful review of the Environmental Assessment and public comments received, I have decided to select Alternative A, which was identified as the Proposed Action in the EA.

With this decision, the Forest Service will authorize Lost Trail Ski Area, Inc. (LTSA) to construct an additional chair lift and two connector ski trails. The selected alternative (Alternative A) includes the following features (see Maps 1 & 2):

- The proposed new chair lift would be about 1300 feet in length and have a rise of about 300 vertical feet.
- The proposed new lift would be located north of the upper terminal of the existing Huckleberry Lift (lift 3).
- The proposed lift location is along the edge of an existing cleared ski trail most of its length. Less than one acre of additional tree clearing would be required for the lift installation.
- One new connector ski trail would be about 600 feet long and provide a gravity route from the upper terminal of the proposed new lift to the existing Speedway Run.
- The other new connector ski trail would also be about 600 feet long and provide a gravity route to the existing Ice Tea ski trail.
- Both proposed ski trails would be incised trails of 18 feet in width with a clearing limit of 22 feet and about 10 percent grade. Only trees in the 22-foot trail clearing would be cut.
- Construction of the proposed chairlift would require a truck crossing over an intermittent tributary of the East Fork of Camp Creek. Maintenance of the proposed chairlift would require all-terrain vehicle access. An armored crossing is proposed

Mitigation measures to reduce environmental effects are an important part of Alternative A. Those mitigation measures analyzed, as part of Alternative A, must be implemented. A complete listing of the mitigation measures is found in the EA (pages II-8 through II-10) and in Section XII of this Decision Notice.

I chose Alternative A because it best meets the purpose and need of the project, it was responsive to the environmental issues, and it was fully consistent with the Bitterroot Forest Plan. A complete discussion of my rationale is found in Section XIV of this document.

Lost Trail 4a

X. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Table 2 compares the effects of the alternatives, emphasized by the issues raised by the public. Issue indicators are the parameters used to measure the effects of each alternative emphasized by those issues.

Table 2, Comparison Of Alternatives

ISSUE AND INDICATOR	ALTERNATIVE A Proposed Action	ALTERNATIVE B No Action
Water Quality (Key Issue) Change in sediment yield above current levels Percent change in water yield above current levels Change in stream temperature	No Change No Change No Change	No Change No Change No Change
Riparian (Key Issue) Acres of riparian habitat potentially affected by proposed actions Effect upon character and function of riparian habitat	Less than 0.1 acre Very small	No Change No Change
Recreation Skier traffic flow improved Increase Capacity	Yes No Change	No Change No Change
Forest Resources Effects of increased capacity Effects on forest fragmentation	No Change (No Increase in capacity) Less than 2 acres cleared within an already fragmented area	No Change No Change
1997 Expansion Decision Implement or modify the Master Development Plan	Modify current plan	No Change in current plan, continue to implement
Wildlife/Fish/Plants Effects on Management Indicator Species (MIS) and Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species (TES) (including lynx)	No effect or Not Likely to Adversely Affect any MIS or TES species	No Change
Range of Alternatives Analyze a full range of alternatives	Analyzed in detail Action alternatives limited by purpose and need, resource constraints, and topography	Analyzed in detail
Forest Management Decisions Skiers have too much influence on Forest Management Evaluate Connected Actions	Forest Plan allocated this area to Management Area 10 – Developed Recreation No Connected Actions	No Change No Change