



MOUNTAIN HIGH
RESORT

**2001 Master Development Plan
Environmental Assessment**



February 2004

Angeles National Forest



stream channel or surrounding vegetation. Therefore, it would not affect willow flycatcher habitat in the area.

The small patch of willows in the location of the proposed parking lot for MHR East does not meet the USFWS/USFS habitat criteria. As a result, there would be no direct effects to willow flycatchers from implementation of this proposal.

While none of the proposed projects at MHR East would occur within willow flycatcher habitat, construction of the proposed employee parking lot south of the Angeles Crest Highway, across from MHR East, could indirectly affect birds during the nesting season. Disturbance of nearby birds would include construction noise and human and vehicle activity. Direct loss of habitat would not occur during construction. The parking lot would be built after the flycatcher-nesting season, which occurs from May through August, to avoid these potential effects on the species.

During the usual winter operations, the birds would have migrated and there would be no direct or indirect effect on this species.

California Spotted Owl

Construction activities within MHR's proposed SUP boundary would result in the removal of native trees. The loss of these trees would not affect this species because the native tree stands do not provide suitable nesting habitat. This species may forage on or near the project boundary. However, based on the Jones & Stokes protocol-level survey conducted May-June 2002, California spotted owls are not present within a 0.5-mile radius of the proposed development under the MHR MDP. Regardless, construction activities would take place during the usual seasonal spring and summer maintenance period, and construction activities would occur within daylight hours, reducing potential effects during the prime nighttime foraging hours for this species.

The resort's winter operations would be almost identical to those conducted in the past, and they would not have significant effects on any spotted owls. The absence of human activity during the night, when owls are most active, would reduce the potential for negative effects on the foraging behavior of spotted owls.

The proposal would not affect the California spotted owl, nor would it result in a trend toward federal listing of the California spotted owl.

Myotis Bats

The proposed actions within the MHR proposed SUP boundary would result in the direct loss of native trees. Potential foraging and roosting habitat would be lost as a result of tree removal. However, because this species has suitable habitat remaining within and outside the SUP boundary, and because MHR activities are local in scope, the proposal would likely affect only individuals, not overall populations of bats. There would be no direct and indirect effects after construction and during the usual winter operations. The proposal has been designed to enhance existing facilities to accommodate the existing peak user levels and not to increase user levels

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during winter operations. The absence of human activity during the night, when bats are most active, would reduce the potential negative effects on these species' foraging behavior.

The proposal may affect individuals, but it is not likely to result in a trend toward federal listing for the *Myotis* species of bats.

San Bernardino Mountain Kingsnake

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Construction activities within MHR's proposed SUP boundary would result in the removal of native trees and non-native plant species, which in turn could result in the direct loss of foraging habitat for this species. The loss of foraging habitat would *not* present a significant effect to this species. Construction would take place during the usual seasonal spring and summer maintenance period. Similar maintenance and construction activities have been approved by the USFS and have taken place in previous spring and summer months. If this species is present, it has coexisted with spring and summer maintenance activities in the past. Construction activities are local in scope and would most likely only affect individuals, not overall populations, because of suitable undisturbed habitat outside the SUP boundary.

There would be no direct and indirect effects after construction and during the usual winter operations. The proposal has been designed to enhance existing facilities to accommodate the existing peak user levels and not to increase user levels during winter operations. Special-status wildlife species would have migrated, would be dormant, and would not be nesting or breeding. In addition, the usual winter recreational activities have been ongoing for numerous years, and kingsnakes that may be present and active during the winter months have coexisted with these activities.

The proposal may affect individuals, but is not likely to result in a trend toward federal listing for the San Bernardino mountain kingsnake.

General Wildlife

Although the proposed construction and improved operations of MHR are not expected to affect wildlife, all efforts would be made to remove only those trees that are necessary for the proposed lift, trail, and parking lot construction. Incorporation of best management practices, including erosion prevention measures and barriers to silt migration into local streams, would help avoid harm to distant downstream aquatic species.

Cumulative Effects to Wildlife

The Forest Service proposes to conduct prescribed burns on Table Mountain, maintain the Big Pines bunkhouse, and reconstruct the Big Pines restroom. The prescribed burn would have a temporary impact on wildlife with the potential for displacement and mortality of individuals. The continued operation of Ski Sunrise in the vicinity of MHR would not act to cumulatively affect wildlife because no improvements to facilities involving vegetation or habitat removal are expected. As previously mentioned, CalTrans is expected to conduct routine maintenance operations on the Highway 2 including repair and replacement of guardrails and repair of asphalt.

Species	Sensitivity?	Surveys?
Southern rubber boa	Moderate	No
San Bernardino ringneck snake	Moderate	No
San Bernardino Mtn. kingsnake	Moderate	No
Coastal Western whiptail	Moderate	No

Step 4: Additional Remarks

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The above reptile species have potential to occur in the project area. However, none were found during surveys conducted by Jones and Stokes Associates, Inc. Surveys were conducted at an appropriate time of year. The snakes are secretive, however, and may have been missed. The proposed project may effect individuals of these sensitive species, but will not lead toward a trend toward federal listing. Any rotting logs or loose bark on logs or snags should be investigated before the trees are removed for the new ski lift alignment. Any snakes found should be relocated into appropriate habitat outside the area of disturbance. Whiptails are generally quick and very mobile and should be able to escape harm during construction. Spotted owls should not be effected by the ski lift replacement.

Signed:

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Wildlife Biologist

Date:

July 9, 1999