



**2001 Mt. Rose/Slide Mountain Facilities
Improvements Proposal**

**Environmental Assessment
Volume II**



**United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Intermountain Region (Region 4)
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Carson Ranger District
Washoe County, Nevada**

March 2003

Mt. Rose 2b, 2d, 5

Lifts

- Upgrade the existing Zephyr Lift to a high speed detachable four- or six-person chairlift utilizing the same alignment
- Install a small lift parallel to the lower portion of the Zephyr Lift servicing a proposed terrain park

Terrain

- Construct three new trail segments to enhance access to existing and proposed skiing terrain
- Improve the surface of existing trails via grading and stumping/smoothing
- Create a dedicated terrain park

Snowmaking

- Construct a water storage impoundment with a capacity of approximately five to seven acre feet (1.6 to 2.2 million gallons) above the *Bonanza* trail to provide a reliable supply for snowmaking, summer irrigation, and fire suppression
- Install snowmaking on eight additional trails totaling roughly 65 acres of coverage

Parking

- Re-grade and expand the East Bowl parking lot to facilitate on-grade access to the Zephyr Lift and Day Lodge and to accommodate additional vehicles (on Washoe County Land)

Chutes Area (on National Forest System land)

Terrain

- Amend the current Mt. Rose SUP to include the Chutes terrain (approximately 131 acres)
- Selectively thin vegetation within the existing "Chutes" to improve skiing opportunities

Lifts

- Install a four-person, fixed-grip lift bringing skiers from the bottom of the "Chutes" terrain (National Forest) to the top of the Showoff Trail on the Mt. Rose side (private land)

Mt. Rose Side (private and National Forest System land)

Buildings

- Construct a mountain-top restaurant between the tops of the Northwest Magnum and Lakeview lifts (on private land)
- Construct two 500-square foot viewing/picnic decks (one on private and one on NFS land)

Lifts

- Extend the top terminal of the Lakeview Chair onto NFS land enabling access to existing and proposed trails

Terrain

- Construct several new trail segments to increase circulation across both sides of the resort

**BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION
MT. ROSE SKI TAHOE
SKI PATROL BUILDING
AND
SILVER DOLLAR TRAIL
SNOWMAKING INSTALLATION AND RE-CONTOURING
Toiyabe National Forest**

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DISTRICT WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

DATE

8/8/06

REVIEWED BY

Elizabeth Bergstrom

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FOREST BOTANIST (Detail)

DATE

8-8-06


devoid of vegetation.

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The proposed building is a single story concrete block, raised floor structure with interior space measuring 28 feet x 16 feet. Electricity will be required and will connect to the existing buried lines that service the adjacent facilities. The estimated area of land disturbance to construct the new ski patrol building would be 0.016 acres. The proposed project will not alter drainage patterns, the rate and amount of surface runoff, or impact water quality in the area. There are no major cuts or fill slopes planned for this project. Construction staging and material transport will be conducted along the existing service road. Sites will be designated and flagged for material delivery and parking of vehicles / construction equipment. Standard construction equipment will include an excavator for excavation of the footing area and associated personnel work trucks. The proposed ski patrol building occurs adjacent to populations of Tahoe draba. The closest plants occur ten feet from the foundation of the proposed building. In order to minimize potential impacts to plants, orange construction fencing will be placed around identified draba populations and potential habitat prior to initiating construction. Pre-construction surveys will be held by Mt. Rose with the contractor to identify these areas and to emphasize the importance of avoiding them. Tahoe draba plants will be individually marked using metal tags and inventoried by Mt. Rose personnel prior to construction. The plants will then be monitored the following two years and the results will be reported to the USFS in order to evaluate the effectiveness of this type of mitigation and to gain information about natural recruitment of the plant. No re-vegetation of disturbed areas resulting from construction of this building is proposed in order to preserve potential habitat for the Tahoe draba (Appendix G, Environmental Assessment, 2001 Mt. Rose / Slide Mountain Facilities Improvements Proposal, Volume II.

During excavation activities a biologist approved by both Mt. Rose and the Forest Service will be present to assure compliance with the defined secure zones for the rare plants. Any observed impacts to the plant or its habitat will be immediately corrected and reported to the Forest Service so that if needed further measures can be implemented. Following excavation bi-weekly visits to the construction site will be conducted to further insure the integrity of the "secure zones." Any observed impacts to the plant or its habitat will be immediately corrected and reported to the Forest Service so that if needed, further measures can be implemented.

3.2 Snowmaking Installation and Re-contouring of Silver Dollar Trail



Mt. Rose is proposing to recontour and install a snowmaking pipeline in the middle of Silver Dollar Ski trail. Mt. Rose and USFS personnel developed an alternative re-contouring plan for the middle section of the Silver Dollar trail in order to minimize the potential impacts to visual and biological resources (See Figure 2 and Photo 2). The proposed project will include reducing the area of potential disturbance from 2.7 acres to less than 1 acre. The re-contouring will take place only in areas of high elevation along the trail; creating islands of native vegetation that will assist in the natural re-vegetation of the area and reduce the potential impact to natural resources. Construction equipment will include an excavator for the re-contouring activities. The proposed project will connect the top and bottom sections that were previously re-contoured. The project will allow for utilization of the parking and lodge facilities on the Slide Bowl in the early season when snow conditions are thinner and during drought years when the snow pack is less than average. Re-contouring and the installation of snowmaking will improve the skiing experience by lessening the severity of terrain irregularities.



Notice of Proposed Action

Opportunity to Comment Carson Ranger District Mt. Rose-Ski Tahoe Trail and Lift Improvement Projects

United States
Department
of Agriculture

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Carson Ranger District
Washoe County, Nevada

Forest Service

May 27, 2008

Comments Welcome

The Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest welcomes your comments on its proposal at Mt. Rose-Ski Tahoe (Mt. Rose) located on State Route 431 (Mt. Rose Highway), approximately 11 miles from Incline Village and 25 miles from Reno, in Washoe County, Nevada (Figure 1). The Mt. Rose ski resort is operated on a combination of National Forest System (NFS) and private lands. Mt. Rose currently operates under a Special Use Permit (SUP) from the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

The existing ski resort consists of the Slide facilities in the southeast portion and the Mt. Rose facilities in the northwest portion of the project area. Each side includes a lodge, parking, lifts, and ski trails. The Proposed Action entails two elements: (1) conducting spot grading, rock blasting, and installing snowmaking infrastructure on select trails on the Slide side of the ski area; and (2) replacing the Ponderosa and Galena chairlifts with one high-speed, detachable chairlift on the Mt. Rose side. Previous environmental documentation pertinent to the Proposed Action includes the 2003 Mt. Rose-Ski Tahoe Approved Master Development Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) for Facilities Improvements.

This proposal will be documented in an environmental assessment (EA). Written, facsimile, hand delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this proposal will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of the 36 CFR 215 Notice of Proposed Action in the Reno Gazette Journal, published on May 22, 2008. For detailed information on how to provide comments please refer to the "Comment Process" section of this document on page 5.

Slide Side Trail Improvement Projects

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the projects at the Slide side of the resort is to provide a reliable and consistent skiing experience during early season and when there is less than average snow pack conditions. Currently Mt. Rose seeks to increase utilization of this portion of

the resort and create viable access to accommodate projected increases in skier/rider volume associated with the construction of a new base lodge and locker facility on private lands at the Slide base area. The Proposed Action is designed to enhance the existing condition of ski trails and provide the necessary linkage terrain during low snow conditions. This action responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the Toiyabe Forest Plan (USFS 1986), and helps move the project area towards desired conditions described in that plan.

The Proposed Action

Projects being proposed on various existing trails for site-specific environmental review at the Slide side include: approximately 23.9 acres of spot grading; 3.0 acres of rock blasting; and snowmaking installation on the trail known as *Sunrise Bowl*. All proposed projects are situated on NFS land within Mt. Rose's Forest Service-issued SUP area (See Figure 2).

During the summer of 2006, US Forest Service and Mt. Rose personnel developed an alternative method to traditionally grading an entire trail called "spot" grading. The method entails using an excavator to re-contour irregularities, high and low spots, on existing trails. This alternative method minimizes the potential disturbance area while preserving islands of native vegetation and reducing potential visual and environmental impacts.

As noted, all of the proposed projects are located below the elevation for Tahoe draba and no other sensitive species would be affected by construction. The proposed project would not alter drainage within the area, or the rate and amount of surface runoff, nor would water quality in the area be impacted.

SPOT GRADING ON SLIDE BOWL

Spot grading would occur on approximately 13.8 acres in various sections of the area known as *Slide Bowl*. As previously approved in the Master Development Plan snowmaking would be installed at a later date to allow for better utilization of this area during the early season. The majority of this area is not visible from the adjacent communities and would not present an affect to the surrounding viewshed.

SPOT GRADING AND SNOWMAKING - SUNRISE BOWL

Spot grading and snowmaking installation would occur on approximately 4.1 acres of the *Sunrise Bowl* trail. The snowmaking pipeline would also be used for irrigation purposes during the summer to promote re-vegetation in the re-contoured areas.

SPOT GRADING LOWER BRUCE'S TRAIL

Spot grading would occur on approximately 2.2 acres of the *Lower Bruce's* trail from the intersection of the *Badlands* terrain park to the *Zephyr Return* traverse.

SPOT GRADING WASHOE ZEPHYR TRAIL

Spot grading would occur on approximately 3.8 acres of the *Washoe Zephyr* trail.

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