

Red Lodge

Beartooth Ranger District News Release



For Immediate Release
Date: June 15, 2010

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Forest Service Seeking Comments on Red Lodge Mountain Easement Exchange

Red Lodge, MT... The Forest Service is asking for public comment on an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposed easement for Red Lodge Mountain Ski Area Road (FS Road #21479). AG/JMA Red Lodge Realty Holdings, LLC (AG/JMA) has asked the Forest Service to consider exchanging easements on portions of Red Lodge Ski Area Road located in the Red Lodge Mountain area of the Custer National Forest. AG/JMA and the Forest Service have entered into a non-binding "Reciprocal Access Agreement" that this proposed exchange is based on.

As part of the proposal, AG/JMA would finance the reconstruction of approximately 1.5 miles of the Red Lodge Mountain Ski Area Road, which extends across intermingled National Forest System and AG/JMA lands. This reconstruction would start at the existing parking lot at the base of the ski area and extend to AG/JMA lands located in Section 26. Reconstruction would improve alignment, reduce steep grades, and meet Carbon County road standards.

Public comments, whether mailed, emailed, or faxed, must be received or postmarked by July 13, 2010. Please address comments to Traute Parrie, District Ranger - Beartooth Ranger District, 6811 Hwy 212, Red Lodge, MT, 59068. Email comments to comments-northern-custer-beartooth@fs.fed.us and include "Red Lodge Mountain" in the subject line. Comments can also be submitted by fax to 406-446-3918.

For more information, please contact the Beartooth Ranger District at 406-446-2103 or visit us online at www.fs.fed.us/r1/custer.

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6811 U.S. Highway 212, Red Lodge, MT 59068
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/custer>



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Forest Service
Northern
Region

Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Red Lodge Mountain Ski Area Master Development Plan

**Custer National Forest
Beartooth Ranger District**

January 1996

The structure and composition of plant communities would be modified with facility construction and the creation of man-made openings. Across the landscape, the composition and juxtaposition of the habitat matrix would increasingly deviate from that found under pre-development conditions.

Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness

Use of the trail and hut system along the summit ridge crest within Management Area R would displace some wildlife, such as deer, elk, and grouse into the adjoining A-B Wilderness, which, in turn, could diminish its wildlife carrying capacity and/or natural integrity. As a result of the trail system, more people would come in close proximity to the A-B Wilderness, which would reduce its relative remoteness and the level of solitude attainable in the Bare Mountain/Red Lodge Creek Plateau area.

Burnt Mountain Roadless Area



Red Lodge 4d

The development of alpine skiing facilities within the upper Cole Creek Basin (Management Area F) and trail and hut development within Management Area R represents permanent vegetation and ground disturbance. Increased recreation use of the area would occur during both the winter and summer. Some wildlife such as deer, elk, and grouse could be displaced into adjoining more remote areas of the Burnt Mountain Roadless Area. The natural integrity and natural appearance of the upper Cole Creek Basin and the summit ridge crest area within the Burnt Mountain Roadless Area would be reduced. The relative remoteness and level of solitude attainable in the upper elevations of the Burnt Mountain Roadless Area would be reduced.

Recommended Wilderness

Alpine skiing facilities in the upper Cole Creek Basin (Management Area F) and use of the trail and hut system along the summit ridge crest (Management Area R) would displace some wildlife, such as deer, elk, and grouse, into the area identified in the Forest Plan for Recommended Wilderness within the Burnt Mountain Roadless Area (Management Area H). This could diminish Management Area H's wildlife carrying capacity and/or natural integrity. As a result of alpine skiing development in the upper Cole Creek Basin and the summit ridge trail system, more people would come in close proximity to the Recommended Wilderness, which would reduce its relative remoteness and level of solitude attainable.

Fire and Fuels Management

Fire risks and hazards would increase in the short-term after vegetation clearing and activity slash creation. Person-caused ignition risks would increase as a result of all the action alternatives. Forest succession, drought, and lack of fire as an ecosystem process would continue to promote insect and disease problems as well as weather-related damage in forest