

**Eldorado National Forest
Placerville Ranger District
Eldorado County**

**Terrestrial Wildlife
Biological Assessment and Evaluation
Sierra at Tahoe Ski Resort Huckleberry Expansion Project
2008**

Prepared by: _____

Date: _____

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ALTERNATIVE TWO - NO ACTION

Effects common to all species

Direct, indirect and cumulative effects:

There are no activities related to vegetation removal under this project, therefore, there will be no direct effects to any of the habitat for the species analyzed in this document. Indirect effects from noise and light related disturbance may occur from snowmobile use to groom the existing trail. Snowmobile use of the trail under this alternative occurs when there is snow on the ground which typically occurs outside the breeding season of the spotted owl, northern goshawk and great gray owl based on fledging at a late date at these higher elevations on the Eldorado National Forest; therefore, there will be no indirect effects to spotted owls, goshawks or great gray owls from disturbance during the nesting season under this alternative. Based on past use of the existing snowmobile trail, less than a hundred members of the public have utilized Huckleberry Canyon annually to outfit or guide (USDA 2006). Though disturbance may be occurring, the snowmobile groomed trail has been in effect for several years, potentially enabling marten and Sierra Nevada fox to acclimate or alter their home ranges to avoid or minimize disturbance, whether spatially or temporally, resulting in potentially negligible effects. However, this can only be speculated as no studies to monitor their movements or behavior in relation to snow management related activities has occurred for this project.

Since there would be no activities that would result in direct or indirect effects, this alternative would not contribute toward any adverse cumulative effects related to disturbance of individuals or habitat for California spotted owl, northern goshawk or great gray owl under the No Action Alternative. In regards to noise and light effects (if grooming by snowmobile occurs when it is dark), there may be an effect that alters movement for marten or Sierra Nevada red fox; though this may be slight to none if the animals have acclimated to it over the years or have shifted their foraging/denning areas to another location; therefore there are no anticipated additional adverse cumulative effects associated with this alternative based on change in conditions from current use patterns.

Appendix A provides a comparison of the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action and provides recommendations to help avoid or mitigate effects that may occur under the Alternatives.

Alternative Conclusion and Summary

The No Action Alternative will not directly affect the suitability of species habitat within the project area and will have no direct effect on any of the species analyzed in this document. *The No Action Alternative will not lead to a trend towards federal listing or a loss of viability for any of the species analyzed in this document.*

VI. DETERMINATIONS

Alternative One - Proposed Action

1. Based on the analysis conducted in this biological evaluation, implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative will have no effect from project activities on the following federally proposed, threatened, endangered, or Region 5 sensitive terrestrial wildlife species potentially occurring on the Forest and therefore no consultation with the USFWS is required.

American bald eagle
Valley elderberry beetle
Willow flycatcher
Western red bat
Pacific fisher

California wolverine
American peregrine falcon
Townsend's big-eared bat
Pallid bat

2. Based on the analysis conducted in this biological evaluation and analysis, implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative may affect individuals or habitat, but is not likely to result in a trend toward Federal listing or loss of viability for the following Forest Service sensitive species:

Northern goshawk
Great gray owl
American marten

California spotted owl
Sierra Nevada red fox

Alternative Two - No Action Alternative

Based on the analysis conducted in this biological evaluation, implementation of the No Action Alternative will have no effect from project activities on the following federally proposed, threatened, endangered, or Region 5 sensitive species potentially occurring on the Forest and therefore no consultation with the USFWS is required.

American bald eagle
Pacific fisher
Valley elderberry beetle
American marten
American peregrine falcon
Sierra Nevada red fox
California spotted owl

California wolverine
Great gray owl
Western red bat
Northern goshawk
Pallid bat
Willow flycatcher
Townsend's big-eared bat

3