

The proposed realignment of the road would meet Forest Service road design standards, and allow for viable runoff water management and easier vehicle access.

Specific Elements of the Proposed Actions

Rayburn's Pond Capacity Increase: ASC is proposing to increase the water storage capacity of the existing Rayburn's Pond from 5.5 acre-feet to approximately 11 acre-feet by excavating material out of the pond and constructing an earthen dam to allow the water level to be raised by approximately 5.5 feet. The purpose of the project is two-fold:

- 1) to increase the on-mountain water storage at Snowmass, providing more capacity for the existing snowmaking system. This will allow ASC make more snow in a shorter timeframe closer to their opening date; and,
- 2) to facilitate the capture and storage of run-off, helping to achieve stream health objectives for the East Fork of Brush Creek.

2b

Big Burn Service Road Realignment: The second project proposed by ASC is to realign approximately 1,400 feet of the existing Big Burn road on the Sneaky's trail, with a new road prism length of approximately 2,200 feet. The purpose of the realignment is to:

- 1) bypass a section of the road which has become problematic due to the steepness of the road, currently a 22% grade. This will allow for a more viable summer maintenance access to the Big Burn and Sheer Bliss lifts, and the Up 4 Pizza Restaurant; and,
- 2) minimize soil erosion that is taking place on an annual basis because of the road's existing alignment and gradient. The gradient of the proposed realignment would be approximately 14%. The old section of road would be re-contoured and reclaimed as appropriate.

Decision

It is my decision to approve both projects described in detail above, and as presented in more detail within the project record. I believe that both projects will improve both existing and potential future resource issues.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or an Environmental Assessment (EA), as outlined in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 31.2, Category 3 – "Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of National Forest System lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land".

I have considered input provided by the interdisciplinary team assembled for this project evaluation, as well as comments and issues that were identified during the scoping process, and have reviewed the Biological Assessment and Biological Evaluation that analyzed the potential biological effects of the proposed actions.