

Final Environmental Assessment
for the
Snowmass Ski Area Master Plan Amendment
Ski Area Improvements

USDA Forest Service
Aspen Ranger District
White River National Forest
Pitkin County, Colorado



Responsible Official:
Maribeth Gustafson
Forest Supervisor
White River National Forest

For Further Information, Contact Jim Stark
Winter Sports Administrator
Aspen Ranger District
806 W. Hallam
Aspen, CO 81611
(970) 925-3445

Snowmass 3

TABLE 2. IMPACTS TO FOREST SERVICE SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES OCCURRING OR POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON THE WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST.

SPECIES	POTENTIALLY SUITABLE HABITAT PRESENT WITHIN ANALYSIS AREA?	DOCUMENTED PRESENCE IN ANALYSIS AREA?	DETERMINATION OF IMPACT TO SPECIES FROM SAM'S KNOB PROJECT*	DETERMINATION OF IMPACT TO SPECIES FROM BIG BURN CHAIRLIFT PROJECT*	DETERMINATION OF IMPACT TO SPECIES FROM BURNT MOUNTAIN PROJECTS*
Plants					
Sea Pink (<i>Ameria maritima</i> ssp. <i>sibirica</i>)	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Park milkvetch (<i>Astragalus leptaleus</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Wetherill milkvetch (<i>Astragalus wetherillii</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Smooth rockcress (<i>Braya glabella</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Lesser panicle sedge (<i>Carex diandra</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Rocky Mountain thistle (<i>Cirsium perplexans</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Yellow lady's slipper (<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>)	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Clawless draba (<i>Draba exunguiculata</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Gray's peak willow-grass (<i>Draba grayana</i>)	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Altai cotton-grass (<i>Eriophorum altaicum</i> var. <i>neogaeum</i>)	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Russet cotton-grass (<i>Eriophorum chamissonis</i>) [E. <i>russeolum</i>]	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Slender cotton-grass (<i>Eriophorum gracile</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Colorado tansy-aster (<i>Machaeranthera coloradoensis</i>)	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Kotzebue grass-of-Parnassus (<i>Parnassia kotzebuei</i>)	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Harrington penstemon (<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Debeque Phacelia (<i>Phacelia scopulina</i> var. <i>submutica</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Porter's leather grass (<i>Ptilagrostis porterii</i>)	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Ice Cold Buttercup (<i>Ranunculus karelinii</i>)	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Sun-loving meadowrue (<i>Thalictrum heliophilum</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Mammals					
Spotted bat (<i>Euderma maculatum</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Wolverine (<i>Gulo gulo</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
River otter (<i>Lontra canadensis</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Marten (<i>Martes americana</i>)	Yes	Yes	NI	MAI	MAI
Fringed myotis (<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>)	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Townsend's Big-eared bat (<i>Plecotus townsendii townsendii</i>)	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Pygmy shrew (<i>Sorex hoyi</i>)	Yes	No	MAI	MAI	MAI
Birds					
Northern goshawk	Yes	No	NI	MAI	MAI



Snowmass 3

TABLE 2. IMPACTS TO FOREST SERVICE SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES OCCURRING OR POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON THE WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST.

SPECIES	POTENTIALLY SUITABLE HABITAT PRESENT WITHIN ANALYSIS AREA?	DOCUMENTED PRESENCE IN ANALYSIS AREA?	DETERMINATION OF IMPACT TO SPECIES FROM SAM'S KNOB PROJECT*	DETERMINATION OF IMPACT TO SPECIES FROM BIG BURN CHAIRLIFT PROJECT	DETERMINATION OF IMPACT TO SPECIES FROM BURNT MOUNTAIN PROJECT*
<i>(Accipiter gentilis)</i>					
Boreal owl <i>(Aegolius funereus)</i>	Yes	No	NI	MAI	MAI
Sage sparrow <i>(Amphispiza belli)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Ferruginous hawk <i>(Buteo regalis)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Greater sage-grouse <i>(Centrocercus urophasianus)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Northern harrier <i>(Circus cyaneus)</i>	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Olive-sided flycatcher <i>(Contopus borealis)</i>	Yes	Yes	NI	NI	MAI
Black swift <i>(Cypseloides niger)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
American peregrine falcon <i>(Falco peregrinus anatum)</i>	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
White-tailed ptarmigan <i>(Lagopus leucurus)</i>	Yes	Yes	NI	NI	BI
Loggerhead shrike <i>(Lanius ludovicianus)</i>	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Lewis' woodpecker <i>(Melanerpes lewis)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Flammulated owl <i>(Otus flammeolus)</i>	Yes	No	NI	NI	MAI
Three-toed woodpecker <i>(Picoides tridactylus)</i>	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Purple martin <i>(Progne subis)</i>	Yes	No	NI	NI	MAI
Brewer's sparrow <i>(Spizella breweri)</i>	Yes	No	NI	MAI	NI
Columbian sharp-tailed grouse <i>(Tympanuchus phasianellus columbianus)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Amphibians					
Boreal toad <i>(Bufo boreas boreas)</i>	Yes	No	MAI	MAI	MAI
Northern leopard frog <i>(Rana pipiens)</i>	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI
Fish					
Bluehead sucker <i>(Catostomus discobolus)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Flannelmouth sucker <i>(Catostomus latipinnis)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Mountain sucker <i>(Catostomus platyrhynchus)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Roundtail chub <i>(Gila robusta)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Colorado River cutthroat trout <i>(Oncorhynchus clarki pleuriticus)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Insects					
Great Basin silverspot <i>(Speyeria nokomis nokomis)</i>	No	No	NI	NI	NI
Hudsonian emerald <i>(Somatochlora hudsonica)</i>	Yes	No	NI	NI	NI

* BI – Beneficial Impact NI – No Impact

MAI - may adversely impact individuals, but would not likely result in a lack of viability in the planning area nor cause a

SNOWMASS MOUNTAIN SKI AREA

CAMPGROUND LIFT RECONSTRUCTION AND CLEARING OF TWO NEW SKI TRAILS

BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Pitkin County, Colorado
July 22, 2003

Prepared For:

Snowmass Mountain Ski Area

40 Carriage Way • PO Box 1248
Aspen, CO 81612



and

USDA Forest Service Aspen Ranger District White River National Forest



Prepared By:



WESTERN BIONOMICS, LLC
Natural Resource Management Services
348 River Road Steamboat Springs, Colorado 80487
970-870-9031

Snowmass 3

Table 1. Snowmass Mountain Ski Area. Campground Lift Reconstruction and Clearing of Two New Ski Trails. Determination of impacts to sensitive species from the proposed project.

Species	Status ¹	Typical Habitat ¹	Potential Habitat Present in Permit Area?	Determination ²
(Sullivantia hapemanii var. purpusii)				
MAMMALS				
Spotted Bat (Euderma Maculatum)	S	B, H	No	No Impact
Townsend's Big-Eared Bat (Plecotopus townsendii pallescens)	S	B	Yes	No Impact
North American Wolverine (Gulo gulo)	S	D	Yes	No Impact
American Marten (Martes americana)	S	D	Yes	MAI
Ringtail (Bassariscus astutus)	S	B, H	No	No Impact
Pygmy Shrew (Sorex hoyi)	S	E, F, G	Yes	MAI
Dwarf Shrew (Sorex nanus)	S	D	Yes	No Impact
BIRDS				
Northern Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis)	S	A, D	Yes	MAI
Boreal Owl (Aegolius funereus)	S	D	Yes	No Impact
Ferruginous Hawk (Buteo regalis)	S	H	No	No Impact
Black Tern (Chlydonias niger)	S	G	No	No Impact
Olive-sided Flycatcher (Contopus borealis)	S	A, C, D, E	Yes	No Impact
Black Swift (Cypseloides niger)	S	B	No	No Impact
Merlin (Falco columbarius)	S	D, G	Yes	No Impact
Common Loon (Gavia immer)	S	F	No	No Impact
Greater Sandhill Crane (Grus canadensis)	S	E, G	Yes	No Impact
Lewis' Woodpecker (Melanerpes lewis)	S	C, D Below 8,000'	No	No Impact
Flammulated Owl (Otus flammeolus)		A, D	Yes	MAI
Osprey (Pandion halliaetus)	S	C, F	No	No Impact
Fox Sparrow (Passerella iliaca)	S	C, E	Yes	No Impact
Northern Three-Toed Woodpecker (Picoides tridaactylus)	S	D	Yes	No Impact
White-Faced Ibis (Plegadis chihi)	S	G	No	No Impact
Purple Martin	S	A, E, F, G	Yes	No Impact

DECISION NOTICE

And

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Environmental Assessment of Proposed Improvements
To the Existing Snowmass Ski Area**

**USDA - FOREST SERVICE
WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST
ASPEN RANGER DISTRICT**

Responsible Official: Jim M. Upchurch

November 2001

Sheer Bliss Water Storage Ponds proposal (both 2.7 acres) compared to the spruce-fir forests of the WRNF (0.00041%) is small in scope and scale.

Determinations

Snowmass 3

The following determinations tier to the Proposed White River National Forest - Land and Resource Management Plan DRAFT EIS (1999) and Appendix N - Biological Assessment and Evaluation, and the determinations made at that time.

The proposed Snowmass Ski Area Snowmaking Storage Ponds is determined to have NO IMPACT to the following Forest Service Sensitive Species: wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*). The proposed Snowmass Ski Area Snowmaking Storage Ponds is determined to have MAY AFFECT INDIVIDUALS, BUT WOULD LIKELY NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT marten (*Martes americana*), pygmy shrew (*Sorex hoyi*), dwarf shrew (*Sorex nanus*), northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), boreal owl (*Aegolius funereus*), olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus borealis*), three-toed woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*), golden-crowned kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*), and clustered lady's slipper (*Cypripedium fasciculatum*).

The rationale for this determination includes:

1. The direct and cumulative effects are limited to 3.5 acres of forest that has already been affected by human activities.
2. Mitigation is offered in Table 2.
3. Quality habitats occur elsewhere in the vicinity, and across the WRNF for these species. (see Cumulative Effects section) The cumulative effect of the WRNF programs and activities have resulted in a preliminary determination that those programs & activities MAY AFFECT INDIVIDUALS, BUT WOULD LIKELY NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT the species, or its habitats (see Revised Forest Plan Appendix N for a complete determination statement), thus the relative small scale of the Snowmass Snowmaking Storage Ponds proposal would not be a major addition of effects to the overall WRNF.

Threatened, Endangered or Proposed Species

Down-stream Fishes

No net water depletions occur with either the Vehicle Maintenance Facility or the Sheer Bliss Water Storage ponds, beyond those consulted upon with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USDI-FWS, 1995) occur as a result of the construction of, or storage of, or evaporation of water for the Sheer Bliss Snowmaking Water Storage ponds.

Canada Lynx

Factor A. The Present or Threatened Destruction, Modification, or Curtailment of Its Habitat or Range.

All of the effects of the proposed actions occur in the existing ski area which can be considered marginal, overall suitability for potential lynx residency, however, lynx could conceptually travel through or occasionally hunt in some of the more dense patches of conifer forest where snowshoe hare likely occur.