

SNOWMASS SKI AREA

Proposed Elk Camp Beginner Park and
Summer Multiple Use Trails

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



March 2006



USDA Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Region
Aspen Ranger District

As described under the Existing Conditions portion of this section, the SWSD (and therefore ASC) are currently subject to minimum streamflow requirements which have historically, and would continue to necessitate the periodic curtailment of snowmaking diversions.

Because the instantaneous demand upon Snowmass Creek would not change associated with this proposal, minimum instream flow conditions would not represent a change from existing conditions. Operationally, Snowmass would maintain compliance with the phased multi-stage CWCB minimum streamflow requirement by:

- Maximizing its use of existing on-mountain storage;
- Utilizing newer, more efficient snowmaking technology to support the proposed new terrain;
- Working with SWSD to optimize system utilization;
- Cooperating with SWSD in investigating options for future water supplies; and
- Coordinating with CWCB and SWSD to continue close monitoring of seasonal flow conditions on Snowmass Creek, and adjusting operations as necessary to maintain minimum streamflow requirements.

Wetlands

Snowmass 4a

Implementation of the Proposed Action would permanently impact jurisdictional wetlands and has potential to temporarily impact WOUS, including wetlands. The proposed projects have been designed to avoid and minimize temporary impact to WOUS, including wetlands to the maximum possible extent. Based on the 2005 wetlands fieldwork, snowmaking pipeline/utility line installation would result in permanent impacts to jurisdictional WOUS, including wetlands.⁸⁵ Delineated WOUS, including wetlands within the boundaries of the proposed snowmaking lines on *Funnel* and *Adam's Avenue* trails are based on wetlands identified in the 1994 FEIS. Prior to ground disturbance, these boundaries will be re-delineated and flagged to avoid and minimize impacts to potential WOUS, including wetlands on *Funnel* and *Adam's Avenue*. Refer to Table 2-3 Project Design Criteria for best management practices that would be implemented to protect wetlands within the Project Area.

Construction of snowmaking pipeline along *Adam's Avenue* would potentially affect the following WOUS, including wetlands identified in the 1994 EIS wetlands mapping:


⁸⁵ Areas within the Beginner Park proposed for utility line installation would also involve full grading; therefore, permanent impacts are proposed.

- PEM wetland on skier's left near the top (southeastern portion) of the trail.
- PEM wetland on skier's left, located approximately 440 feet upslope of the lower terminal of the Alpine Springs lift.
- Crossing of two perennial stream channels.

Construction of snowmaking on *Funnel* would potentially affect the following wetlands identified in the 1994 EIS wetlands mapping:

- PEM wetland on skier's right near the bottom of *Funnel*, located roughly 700 feet east of the lower terminal of the Naked Lady chairlift.

Table 3A-17:
Waters and Wetlands Impacts



Wetland Type	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Palustrine Emergent (PEM)	-	0.24 acre	-
Palustrine Shrub/Scrub (PSS)	-	-	-
Palustrine Forested (PFO)	-	0.55 acre	-
Fen	-	-	-
Open Water (OW)	-	0.11 acre	-
Perennial Stream Channel	-	-	-
Total Wetland Acreage	0.0 acre	0.90 acre	0.0 acre

Source: SE GROUP, 2006

With in-kind mitigation pursuant to USACE permitting requirements under Section 404 of the CWA, Alternative 2 would satisfy WCPH Management Measure 6. Explanatory text accompanying Management Measure 6 notes: "The Corps of Engineers protects wetlands under Section 404 regulations, which may permit wetland impacts if mitigation measures are applied to replace wetland values in-kind." With no permanent wetlands impacts, Alternative 3 would also satisfy WCPH Management Measure 6.

Wetlands in areas of tree cover proposed for flush cutting would experience a shift in general plant composition (wetland type conversion). Increased amounts of solar radiation reaching the ground and increased available moisture (resulting from decreased ET rates) would favor different species such as heart-leaf bitter-cress (*Cardamine cordifolia*) and chiming bluebells (*Mertensia ciliata*). In addition, associated with the proposed enlargement of Rayburn's Pond, some type conversion of wetlands around the pond perimeter from PEM to POW would occur.

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US Army Corps
of Engineers

Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice

Number: 200475419

Date: October 18, 2004

Comments Due: November 16, 2004.

SUBJECT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct the Base Village Planned Unit Development (PUD) and the Fanny Hill Cabins (Wood Run Unit 5, Parcel 7) projects. These development projects would result in the permanent impact to approximately 0.367 acre of jurisdictional waters of the United States (U.S.), including wetlands, adjacent to Brush Creek in Snowmass Village, Colorado. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/regulatory.html>.

AUTHORITY: This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the U.S.

APPLICANT: Intrawest/Brush Creek Development Company, LLC
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Agents: Aspen Skiing Company
Mr. Gerardus H. Van Moorsel, Construction Manager
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Aspen, Colorado 81612
(970) 923-8757

Earth Resource Investigations, Incorporated
Mr. William J. Johnson
1700 County Road 103
Carbondale, Colorado 81623
(970) 263-1356

LOCATION: The project site is located in the Town of Snowmass Village within Section 1, Township 10 South, Range 86 West, Pitkin County, Colorado, and can be seen on the Highland Peak, USGS Topographic Quadrangle.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing overlot grading activities to redevelop the existing 19.1 acre-Snowmass Ski Area base area. This redevelopment is proposed as a high density town core area containing a large pedestrian plaza servicing two ski lifts, an aquatic center, 349 residential condominium units, 261 hotel operated condominium units, related skier services and commercial space. An estimated 275,000 cubic yards (yds³) of material will be cut for overlot grading, 125,000 yds³ of clean fill material will be filled across the project site, permanently impacting 0.235 acre of jurisdictional waters of the U.S., including wetlands. Impact areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 are identified on Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, respectively. Construction is intended to begin in the spring of 2005 and extend through five phases over a 7-year period.

The applicant is proposing additional grading activities to develop the 1.92-acre-Wood Run Unit 5, Parcel 7 PUD adjacent to the Fanny Hill ski trail, as a 10 unit Townhouse project. The applicant is proposing a 27-space underground parking structure to accompany this project. Access road impacts associated with this development project will permanently impact 0.132 acre of jurisdictional waters of the U.S., including wetlands along a roadside drainage channel. Impact area 5 is identified on Figures 3, 12 and 13. Construction is intended to begin by spring 2005 with anticipated completion by 2010.

The applicant states that much of the existing 19.1 acre-Base Village site has been historically disturbed during original ski area resort development. This site currently is used for day skier parking and road access to lifts and contains a ski area administration building, vehicle maintenance facility and a small medical clinic. The Wood Run site is currently used as a beginner ski run area with several servicing Poma lifts and is adjacent to the Burlingame and Fanny Hill lifts.

Based on the available information, the overall project purpose is to develop a Town of Snowmass Village core area, provide additional skier services, residential and commercial development, roads, buildings, infrastructure and community amenities. The applicant believes, in part, there is a need for this development based upon meeting the goals of the Town of Snowmass Village Comprehensive Plan for a high density, pedestrian friendly Town core area. The attached drawings provide additional project details.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Environmental Setting. The Base Village project area is characterized by fragmented palustrine emergent and scrub-shrub drainage swales hydrologically connected by buried pipe and palustrine emergent scrub-shrub slope seeps. The Brush Creek corridor flows west to east parallel to the northern property boundary.

Existing elevations range from approximately 8470 feet above mean sea level (msl) near the upslope limits of the project site to 8348 msl downslope towards the Brush Creek corridor. The Wood Run project parcel faces northeast with an average slope of approximately eight degrees (14%) and is situated at approximately 8558 msl upslope from the Base Village project.

Alternatives. The applicant has provided information concerning alternatives for the Base Village and Fanny Hill projects. This includes the no action alternative, which was dismissed by the applicant as rendering the site undevelopable in a manner that would achieve the goals of the community.