

Decision Memo

Telluride Ski and Golf, LLC

Little Rose Winch Cat Project

USDA Forest Service
Norwood Ranger District
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
San Miguel County, Colorado
T. 42 N, R. 9 W, Section 13

Background

The Norwood Ranger District has considered a proposal from Telluride Ski and Golf, LLC (Telski) to build a catwalk at the top of the Little Rose ski run that would be used by a winch cat for early season snow compaction. During the ski season the catwalk would provide skier access to Little Rose and Andy's Gold ski trails.

The purpose and need for this action is to provide a safe platform for a winch cat to utilize a weighted roller in order to compact the snow on Little Rose. Early season snow compaction provides a consolidated base layer that helps to mitigate avalanche concerns throughout the season. Reducing avalanche concerns associated with Little Rose is a benefit to the skiing public. Currently, there is not a level spot that is safe for the winch cat operator to use the roller mechanism. Construction of the Little Rose catwalk would enhance the overall safety to the winch cat operator allowing them to do their job. The catwalk would also provide skier access during the winter months.

The proposed action will affect about 250-300 feet of ground at the top of the Little Rose run. The project will take place at an elevation of 12,000 feet and is located in a rock scree field. The construction phase will utilize heavy equipment and explosives to blast through the hardened rock layers. Material generated by the construction process will be broadcasted down slope in a manner that will not affect the existing trail.

Decision

I have decided to allow Telski to construct the Little Rose Winch Cat platform and the associated catwalk. The project will be implemented during the 2009 summer season and will be closely monitored by my staff members to ensure compliance.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment under Category 31 .2 .3 Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of National Forest System lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land (Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30).