

EFFECTS ON SENSITIVE WILDLIFE SPECIES

Species	"No Action" Determination	Proposal Determination	Summary of Effects
Bald Eagle	NI	NI	No increase in mortality risk. Closest bald eagle nest is over three miles away but project is well outside of Zones I, II, III, and foraging habitat. No expected displacement of bald eagles nesting and/or feeding. No change in prey base.
Black-backed Woodpecker	NI	NI	The proposal is not in recent post-fire habitat. The proposal would not change the likelihood of the creation of new post-fire habitat. It would not remove any current potential post-fire feeding or nesting habitat, nor would it remove potential future nesting and feeding.
Boreal Toad	NI	MIIH	Proposed upland activities may alter existing non-breeding habitat for the short-term and may cause mortality of adult toads. No effects on wetlands.
Common Loon	NI	NI	No disturbance effects to loons due distance to Whitefish Lake, and no effects downstream.
Fisher	NI	MIIH	Possible displacement effects during operations. No facilitation of access for trapping. Actions could remove a small area (two acres) of potential denning habitat. Connectivity along riparian habitat corridors would not be affected. Possible displacement effects during operations.
Flammulated Owl	NI	NI	No effects due to lack of potential habitat.
Harlequin Duck	NI	NI	No disturbance effects to harlequins due distance to Swift Creek and Big Creek, and no effects downstream.
Northern Bog Lemming	NI	NI	No vegetation manipulation in potential habitat. No effects on wetlands.
Northern Leopard Frog	NI	NI	No vegetation manipulation in potential habitat. No effects on wetlands.
Peregrine Falcon	NI	NI	One feeding observation 10 miles north; closest known nesting 35 miles southeast. No nesting habitat in or adjacent to the proposed areas, and no affect on potential prey sources.
Townsend's Big-Eared Bat	NI	MIIH	No vegetation manipulation in potential habitat. Slight potential for loss potential roosting habitat. No effects on wetlands.

Species	"No Action" Determination	Proposal Determination	Summary of Effects
Wolverine <i>(Candidate Species for listing under the Endangered Species Act)</i>	<p style="text-align: center;">NI</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MIH</p>	<p>Possible temporary displacement effects on individuals during construction and transport of the chairlift and its towers. No facilitation of access for trapping. Connectivity of forested cover would not be affected by the two acres of clearing. Considering the large scale of wolverine dispersal, these effects would not be measurable, nor would availability of carrion and other food sources be measurably affected. This ski area includes areas where reliable deep snow accumulations into the spring suggest potential for wolverine denning habitat and year-round habitat use (Aubry et al. 2007, Copeland et al. 2010). Wolverine home ranges generally do not occur near human settlements, possibly due to disturbance (May et al. 2006, Copeland et al. 2007). According to the 12-month review (Federal Register/Vol.75, No. 239/Tuesday, December 14, 2010/Proposed Rules), "It is clear that wolverines can coexist with some level of human disturbance and habitat modification. How much is too much is not known. The proximity of wolverine habitats to areas heavily or moderately used for dispersed recreation needs more study, especially where there is overlap during the denning season. What little information exists suggests that wolverines can adjust to moderate habitat modification, infrastructure development, and human disturbance." Other than the 1.2 acres near the upper terminal of Chair 5, no additional ski terrain would be developed in this proposal.</p>

BI = "Beneficial Impact"; **NI** = "No Impact"; **MIH** = "May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but Will Not Likely Result in a Trend Toward Federal Listing or Reduced Viability for the Population or Species".


In accordance with FSM 2673.42, these determination statements for the segment of the population using the analysis area meet the requirements of a Biological Evaluation for Sensitive Wildlife Species.

Literature Cited:

Aubry, K.L., K.S. McKelvey, and J.P. Copeland. 2007. Distribution and broadscale habitat associations of the wolverine in the contiguous United States. *J. of Wildlife Management* 71:2147-2158.

Copeland, J.P., K.S. McKelvey, K.B. Aubry, A. Landa, J. Persson, R.M. Inman, J. Krebs, E. Lofroth, H. Golden, J.R. Squires, A Magoun, M.K. Schwartz, J. Wilmot, C.L. Copeland, R.E. Yates, I. Kojola, and R. May. 2010. The bioclimatic envelope of the wolverine (*Gulo gulo*): do climatic constraints limit its geographic distribution? *Canadian J. of Zoology* 88: 233-246.

May, R., A. Landa, J. van Dijk, J.D.C. Linnell, and R. Andersen. 2006. Impact of infrastructure on habitat selection of wolverines *Gulo gulo*. *Wildlife Biology* 12:285-295.

Prepared by: 
 Amy H. Jacobs
 Wildlife Biologist
 Tally Lake Ranger District
 Flathead National Forest

Date: Jan 21, '11

SENSITIVE WILDLIFE SPECIES BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION
SUMMARY OF CONCLUSION OF EFFECTS

Big Mountain Chairs 1 and 2 Projects
Tally Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest

Winter Sports, Inc., operators of the Big Mountain Ski and Summer Resort, is proposing to install new upper and lower terminals for Chair 1. The old terminals would be moved to Chair 2, which would be slightly redelineated so that its lower end is closer to that of Chair 1. The upper terminal for Chair 1 would be dismantled starting in May. The new upper terminal would be transported via about 4 trips up the Taylor Creek Road during the summer. Replacing the upper terminal for Chair 1 would cover about a 5-month period, but would require no new ground disturbance. The old Chair 1 upper terminal would be transported via existing roads to very close to the top of Chair 2. The new delineation for Chair 2 would require the felling of less than 3 acres of trees from three small inter-trail islands. Some of these acres were included solely to reduce the visual effects of the old Chair 2. The proposal was modified in April 2007 so that there would no longer be any felling of about 70 trees (1/8 acre) from a much larger area of dense mesic forest. New tower pads would be dug and poured for Chair 2 only. No new roads would be needed for this project.

The legal location for this project is the SE ¼ of Sec. 35, T32N, R22W. The lower terminals for both Chairs 1 and 2 are on private property.

Species	"No-Action" Determination	Proposal Determination	Background Information Summary
Black-backed woodpecker	NI	NI	No effects due to lack of vegetative manipulation in potential habitat. Not in recently burned area.
Boreal (Western) toad	NI	MIIH	Small opportunity for squashing adult toads via motorized vehicles and equipment. No downstream effects on small wetlands.
Common loon	NI	NI	No effects due to distance and lack of downstream effects on lake habitats.
Fisher	NI	MIIH	Small amount of possible habitat loss. Possible displacement effects during operations. No facilitation of access for trapping.
Flammulated owl	NI	NI	No effects due to lack of potential habitat—too mesic and high elevation.
Harlequin duck	NI	NI	No effects due to distance and lack of downstream effects on lake habitats.
Northern bog lemming	NI	NI	No vegetation manipulation in potential habitat. No downstream effects on small wetlands.
Northern goshawk	NI	MIIH	Small amount of possible habitat loss. Possible displacement effects during operations.

Species	"No-Action" Determination	Proposal Determination	Background Information Summary
Northern leopard frog	NI	NI	No potential habitat. No downstream effects on small wetlands.
Peregrine falcon	NI	NI	No vegetation manipulation in potential habitat. No expected downstream effects. No cliff habitat.
Townsend's big-eared bat	NI	MIIH	Small amount of possible habitat loss. No caves, mine shafts or abandoned buildings in vicinity.
Wolverine	NI	MIIH	Possible displacement effects during operations. No facilitation of access for trapping.

NI = No Impact

MIIH = May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but Will Not Likely Result in a Trend Toward Federal Listing or Reduced Viability for the Population or Species.

Prepared by:

Amy H. Jacobs

Amy H. Jacobs
Wildlife Biologist
Tally Lake Ranger District

Date:

May 4, '07

**Northern Region
Fish Sensitive Species Biological Evaluation**

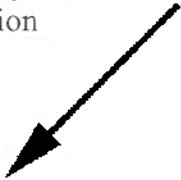
Summary of Conclusion of Effects

Project Name: *Big Mountain Ski Resort Chair 2 Realignment Project*

Possible Determinations:

- No Impact.
- May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but will not likely result in a trend towards federal listing or reduced viability for the population or species.
- Likely to Impact Individuals or Habitat with a consequence that the action may contribute towards federal listing or result in reduced viability for the population or species.
- Beneficial Impact

<u>Species</u>	<u>Determination</u>
Westslope Cutthroat Trout (<i>Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi</i>)	May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but will not likely result in a trend towards federal listing or reduced viability for the population or species



This biological evaluation is prepared to evaluate the effects of allowing Big Mountain Ski Resort to realign Chair 2. The purpose is to improve skier access to chair lifts in the base area and to replace the aging and antiquated chair lift system. The proponent seeks to install new upper and lower terminals for Chair 1 (not part of this decision). The old terminals would be moved via existing roads to become terminals for Chair 2. New tower pads would be dug and poured for the terminals. The lower terminal, which is on private land, will be moved so that its lower end is closer to that of Chair 1. The upper terminal, which is on National Forest system lands, remains at about the same location. Because of the new delineation for Chair 2, several hundred merchantable sized trees (greater than 7" dbh) would be removed. These trees are located in forested islands between ski runs and the chair alignment would require them to be removed for proper clearance. A few additional trees would be removed to meet visual standards along the old Chair 2 route. The entire acreage of the timber to be removed is approximately 2 acres. Work would be completed by existing roads or helicopters and no new roads are needed. The project would take place either in late winter on snow or during summer. The legal location for this project is the SE ¼ of Sec. 35, T32N, R22W.

The project is located in the headwaters of Haskill Creek. In the project area, Haskill Creek has several unnamed, intermittent tributaries that gradually increase in size and become perennial near the National Forest system lands property line. There is no fish habitat on National Forest system lands. About one mile downstream of the property line, Haskill Creek supports an isolated population of westslope cutthroat trout of unknown genetic purity. Further downstream, Haskill Creek is reported to contain non-