

FOREST SERVICE APPLICATION  
MARCH 18, 2008

7. A. This application is for a Special Use permit to allow for Alpine touring via snowcat in Management Area 5 on the Bitterroot National Forest as identified in Exhibit 1. We would like to glade the forest directly west of the Maclay Ranch, south of Carlton Lake Road to allow for Alpine ski touring that would interface with the existing trail network on the ranch. Management Area 5 in the Carlton Lake drainage would also be accessed by the snowcoach and guided tours would be offered in conjunction with the existing Alpine program.

Our application is also for Nordic Skiing and Mountain Biking on the Lolo National Forest (See Exhibit 2). We would like to develop a trail network that would include new sections of trail and blending them into existing road beds in the McClain and Mormon Creek drainage.

- B. No facilities are planned for the Alpine touring operation on forest lands.

For the Nordic system we intend to use the existing Yurt at the 6200 foot level of the Maclay Ranch as the trailhead. We propose positioning a second Yurt on the Overlook location at the 5850 foot level (See Exhibit 2). Each Yurt will have port-a-lets. Trail identification and directional signage will be used throughout the system to identify trails and their level of difficulty.

- C. Alpine skiing will take place in the areas indicated as Management Area 5 on Exhibit 1. The acreage in Management Area 5 located directly west of Maclay Ranch and south of Carlton Lake Road will be gladed to allow for guided snowcat tours. Glading will conform to the visual quality objective of "Partial Retention" as defined by the U.S. Department of Agricultural Handbook No 617, Volume 2, Chapter 7, pg. 4. Please see Exhibit 3 for an example of the glading we propose, using the "Interconnected" drawing showing 50% cleared, with 200 – 300 feet (vs. 500 feet as shown in Exhibit 3) between tree islands. This will allow for grooming of the area by snowcats.

The Nordic trail system would be a continuation of the trails currently developed on Maclay private land (See Exhibit 2). We intend to use 18.9 miles of existing logging roads for the Nordic trail network. We intend to create 19.4 miles of new trail surface. Clearing and brushing will occur on existing road beds. We estimate 5.7 miles will require brushing and 4 miles of existing trail will require heavy brushing. The need for grading of the trail to maintain a 16 foot road width can be determined upon site visit with specialists. Roads will be prepared to allow for skiing on minimal snowpack. For mountain biking in the summer months a drainage and re-vegetation program will be established. Once we have been able to survey the overall length of the grades in the Nordic system, we can design a touring system that will accommodate low ability levels. The trail

system will be designed so we do not expose anyone to a long sustained grade over 6%.

Certified ski patrolmen will be on staff and be trained to respond to all locations within the permit. The Nordic trails will be swept at the end of each operational day and a head count will be taken with the guided tour groups to ensure everyone's return to the base. Nordic trails will be groomed an average of twice a week and as required by snow conditions.

D. The permit is requested for 99 years.

E. Alpine and Nordic skiing will begin (snow cover permitting) the 1<sup>st</sup> of November and conclude April 15<sup>th</sup>. Mountain biking will begin in June and go through October. Maintenance activities will be ongoing year round.

F. For Alpine skiing we anticipate running up to 5 snowcats (capacity 15 per snowcat) 7 days a week from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup>.

We estimate the Nordic trail system will average 30 skiers a day during the first season.

A market evaluated fee will be determined prior to operation.

G. Upon permit approval; glading in the Alpine touring area will take place in a 4 month period, and development of the Nordic/Biking trail system will take 5 months time to construct and re-vegetate.

H. Staging for all construction will take place at the Trailhead Yurt area or at Mile post #5 on the 1311 Road, of the Maclay Ranch.

15. A. Three years of touring the residents of Missoula and the Bitterroot Valley up to the established runs on the Maclay Ranch has demonstrated to us the growing need for quality winter recreation in this area. Approximately 2,800 people have expressed their support of developed recreation on Carlton Ridge and Lolo Peak, after hearing presentation of the benefits both socially and economically to our region.

We estimate our cost to construct the Alpine and Nordic trails to be \$275,000. We estimate our annual operating costs for both Alpine and Nordic to be \$450,000. We estimate annual maintenance for both Alpine and Nordic to be \$20,000.

B. We have not developed any alternatives.

C. Given the loss of forest related jobs in the area, and the general downward trend in agriculture, the number of guest service jobs this resort will create

provides a needed economic stimulus. This resort will allow for easy year round access to a much broader spectrum of age groups and ability levels than currently enjoy our forest lands. A permit for developed recreation on Carlton Ridge and Lolo Peak is an excellent response to the goal of Forest Service Chief Gail Kimbell to put more “kids in the woods.”

16. The economic impacts will be similar to what has been experienced the last 3 years that we have conducted tours on the Maclay Ranch. There will be an additional 10 employees needed to support the upgraded operation. We estimate \$300,000 in supplies, salaries and equipment will be spent locally.

The social impact involves faster and easier access to Forest lands. The guided experience would promote an increased appreciation for our public land. It would provide quality access in the limited time frame that the majority of the public has to recreate with their friends and families.

There will be little, or no effect on surrounding rural lifestyles.

17. The likely environmental effects for this project will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Study.

We have done a preliminary review of soil conditions in the areas to be effected.

There are 8 soil types within the Alpine area specified in the proposal for a Special Use permit. These soils are generally very well drained, and have a high capacity for storing water. Some are deep (>60 in) forest soils, and few have shallow root limiting layers, making these soils unstable in places, depending on slope position and geological features.

We plan to carefully evaluate tree and shrub removal as we route the Nordic and Mountain Biking trails to retain as much vegetation as possible.

All proposed trails and gladed areas will be mapped and GPS coordinates recorded. Before any clearing of the proposed trails and glading, they will be walked by a hydrologist and soil/geology experts to assure optimum design of the skiing trail system.

20. United States Forest Service.