



BITTERROOT RESORT

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Jim Gill, Bitterroot Resort, 406-273-2223 jim@bitterrootresort.us www.bitterrootresort.us

Scott Peyron, Scott Peyron & Associates, 208-388-3800 speyron@peyron.com www.peyron.com

BITTERROOT RESORT SUBMITS A REFINED PLAN FOR A RECREATION DESTINATION

MISSOULA, Montana – Bitterroot Resort on Monday submitted a special use permit application to the Forest Service that requests 1,680 acres of federal land adjacent to the Maclay Ranch in the northern Bitterroot Valley be designated as part of a destination ski resort. The proposal is a specific, refined response to the agency's informing Bitterroot Resort proponents in 2005 that a previous concept plan for a destination ski resort on the Bitterroot and Lolo National Forests would not be accepted at that time but that a different application might subsequently be considered.

"We are pleased to have the Bitterroot National Forest review the proposal of a world class team that is well qualified to create a destination that puts the Missoula area on the map for superior year-round recreation," said Tom Maclay, founder of Bitterroot Resort. "I believe our community is beginning to more fully appreciate the great potential of this site as well as the economic development opportunities that come with having appropriately planned, ecologically sustainable recreation and tourism amenities in one of the most outstanding natural settings in the U.S."

Bitterroot Resort in a letter dated Monday presented its proposed destination resort concept to Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor Dave Bull. The proposal is consistent with the land-use designations in the existing forest plan and requires no change in use of the Research Natural Area located outside the proposed ski area. The resort team will offer supporting mapping and documentation of the concept plan in the coming months. Bitterroot Resort looks forward to the Forest Service conducting a public environmental review process for the proposal.

Bitterroot Resort has projected an economic development infusion of more than \$1 billion during the build-out phase of a resort with approximately 2,200 homes and hotel rooms designed and developed by resort industry leaders. The resort will include outstanding alpine skiing and snowboarding, Nordic skiing, ice skating, mountain biking, fly-fishing, a Tom Weiskopf signature golf course, and other amenities, while meeting ecologically sensitive and sustainable development standards.

The Forest Service has had a 40-year partnership with the National Ski Area Association to guide communities in the wise use of forests "to promote rural economic development and a quality rural environment" while demonstrating sustainable multiple use management. Bitterroot Resort's proposal would provide a significant amount of high quality skiing and snowboarding on a parcel of public land that is less than two-tenths of one percent the size of the adjacent Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Bitterroot Resort presented the alpine ski area and Nordic skiing proposals together. The Nordic skiing proposal has already cleared the first level of the Forest Service's review process. Bitterroot Resort intends to demonstrate the need for safe transport from the valley floor using a chair lift and the link between alpine skiing and the viability of the Nordic ski venture. The Bitterroot National Forest land requested for a destination resort is currently approved for use by motorized vehicles, and is a security

zone for the Bitterroot Valley's burgeoning elk population. Bitterroot Resort is confident that the proposed ski area and wildlife can co-exist. Bitterroot Resort and members of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation are discussing plans to safeguard and optimize wildlife habitat, and provide ample opportunities for public wildlife viewing.

Bitterroot Resort will continue to participate in the public planning process for the new forest plans for the Lolo, Bitterroot and Flathead National Forests. We remain committed to ski opportunities on Carlton Ridge and Lolo Peak as contemplated under the existing Lolo Forest Plan

“We ask that the expanded recreational and economic development opportunities for western Montana be more fully considered,” Maclay said. “We have the opportunity for a template for future planning that includes increased wilderness area, additional area for research, and fabulous recreation close to a growing human population with growing recreation demand.”

Economic statistics generated by the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana [www.itrr.umt.edu] demonstrate that few industries can match tourism and recreation's power:

- \$2.62 billion in total industry output each year from non-resident sources alone
- 37,000 jobs and more than \$738 million in personal income supported by out-of-state recreation and tourism.
- Montana state and local governments received an estimated \$135 million in taxes attributable to non-resident traveler spending in 2003, the most current available data.

“We've stressed that the economic development potential of a destination resort makes it our responsibility as a community to request and expect that a place can be reserved in the forest plans so that outstanding sports and recreation resources can help our community in the future,” said Jim Gill, chief operating officer of Bitterroot Resort and the former general manager of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. “At the same time, we should recognize the stewardship ethics demonstrated by all generations of the Maclay family, and the integrity of the surrounding grassland, transition and alpine environments in this unique location. Appropriate ecologically sustainable community planning will secure the long-term viability of this area for future generations of Montanans.”

About Bitterroot Resort

With the greatest potential vertical descent in North America, Bitterroot Resort is designed to be a world-class year-round recreation destination with alpine, snowboard and cross-country ski venues, signature golf, fly-fishing, mountain biking, ice skating and other amenities existing alongside a four-season resort village and residential community. The Bitterroot Team aims to incorporate the ideas and interest of the Bitterroot Valley community to create a village filled with cultural and recreational opportunities for both the local and visiting public. For more information visit www.bitterrootresort.us.