



May 26, 2005

Debbie Austin  
Lolo National Forest  
Building 24, Fort Missoula  
Missoula, MT 59804

**RE: Forest Plan Revision**

Dear Ms. Austin,

As you proceed with the revision of the Lolo National Forest Plan under the new planning rule, the Bitterroot Resort team wants to express its endorsement of the Forest Service's process of refinement and inclusion of all members of the public to develop a comprehensive new plan for the Lolo.

By carefully considering the vision of the forest as expressed by all those who work and play on it, the Forest Service will be demonstrating a sensitivity to its customers that will serve all of us for decades to come.

Throughout the revision process, we urge the Forest Service to fully consider expanded recreational and economic development opportunities in western Montana, and ensure that the revised plans allow for the exploration of such prospects.

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

- \$2.62 billion in total industry output 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.

The Bitterroot Resort team is committed to participating in each stage of the Forest Service's revised planning process in an effort to continue to demonstrate the value of recreation and tourism to the Montana and Northwest economies.

Thank you for continuing dialogue and consideration throughout the process.

Tom Maclay  
Bitterroot Resort Chief Executive Officer

Jim Gill  
Bitterroot Resort Chief Operating Officer

David Blair  
Bitterroot Resort Communications Director