



NEWS RELEASE

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BITTERROOT RESORT TEAM SUPPORTS FRIENDS OF LOLO PEAK CALL FOR MORE WILDERNESS IN EXPANSE WEST AND SOUTH OF LANTERN RIDGE

MISSOULA – Bitterroot Resort today presented maps to the public that recommend about 12,000 acres be designated in a new forest plan as an area suitable for skiing and snowboarding and that express support for a Friends of Lolo Peak recommendation for wilderness designation for 7,000 acres west and south of Lantern Ridge, adjacent to Lolo Peak.

“Some of the most pristine lands in the United States lie within a short hike or ski traverse of resorts, and the two can co-exist beautifully in nature,” said Tom Maclay, chief executive officer of Bitterroot Resort, whose family has been on or has owned the land at the foot of the forest for more than 100 years. “Enjoyment of wilderness is as much a part of who we are as a Bitterroot Resort team as it is for other Montanans, and we want to add our voice to that of the Friends of Lolo Peak to grow the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Area. We think western Montana can be the next place where more Americans are provided greater access to wilderness views and adventures on ski lifts.”

As the new forest plans are being developed on the Lolo, Bitterroot and Flathead National Forests, leaders of the proposed Bitterroot Resort endorse the Forest Service’s process of refinement and urge full consideration of expanded recreational and economic development opportunities in western Montana.

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 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.

Bitterroot Resort officials on Thursday will submit comments for the record and will participate in the next stage of the Forest Service’s planning process in an effort to continue to demonstrate the value of recreation and tourism to the Montana and Northwest economies.

“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 this

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outstanding sports and recreation resource can be considered in the future,” said Jim Gill, chief operating officer of Bitterroot Resort and the former general manager of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. “The four-season recreation potential of this unique location is so outstanding we owe it to future generations of Montanans to give careful consideration to Bitterroot Resort.”

About Bitterroot Resort

Bitterroot Resort is a proposed all-season destination utilizing the private land of the Maclay Ranch and the National Forest lands of Carlton Ridge and Lolo Peak. With the greatest vertical descent in North America, Bitterroot Resort is designed to be a world-class alpine, snowboard and cross-country ski venue, complete with 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 replete with cultural and recreational opportunities for both the local and visiting public. For more information visit www.skibitterrootresort.com.
