



File Code: 1950

Date: May 4, 2009

Dear Interested Party,

This letter describes a number of proposed projects or activities we are currently reviewing and considering for approval. As a part of the environmental analysis process, we are soliciting your input on these projects. Please share any issues or concerns you may have relative to these actions. A project contact is listed should you have any questions or desire further information.

The Salt Lake Ranger District has made a preliminary assessment that these proposals fall within categories of actions listed in the Forest Service NEPA Handbook that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the category. The following list provides brief project descriptions and contact information. Additional information on these projects, as well as other District and Forest proposals, are available at Forest's website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/uwc/projects/wcnf/proposed/index.shtml>.

Non-Recreation Special Uses

- **Brighton Properties Access Road Relocation** - Brighton Properties currently has an existing and gated access road to Silver Lake Estates #2 that leaves the west side of the Solitude Nordic Center parking area. This road is currently authorized under a special use permit. There is a need for year-round access and to accommodate access for emergency vehicles into the Silver Lake Estates community. Brighton Properties, in cooperation with the FS, is proposing a new access point for the existing road that will move this traffic out of the busy Nordic Center parking area. The new proposed access road will be located just west of the current access into the Nordic Center parking area and will directly leave the State Highway (Brighton Loop), cross through the NW corner of the Nordic Center parking area and tie into the existing access road into Silver Lakes Estates. The new access road will be paved and gated. **Contact:** Al Soucie, 801-236-3450 or asoucie@fs.fed.us.
- **Recreation Residence Modification, Firs # 14** - The Permit holders of lot #14 in the Firs Recreation Residence Tract in upper Mill Creek Canyon are proposing to remove and replace the cabin on this lot. The existing cabin is in poor condition structurally and is infested with rodents and has not been used for years. The replacement cabin will have about the same size footprint as the current cabin and will be required to meet Salt Lake County building requirements and Salt Lake Valley Health Department requirements. **Contact:** Al Soucie, 801-236-3450 or asoucie@fs.fed.us.
- **Wasatch Mountain Club (WMC) Permit Reissuance** - This proposal calls for a 15 year re-issuance of the special use permit for the WMC facility on the Salt Lake Ranger District. The permit would be re-issued for the continued purpose of operating and maintaining a



clubhouse. No changes will be made from the previous permit. The WMC Lodge is an historic building located within the Brighton Resort Ski Boundary. The WMC has historic roots in the Wasatch Range and has been around for a number of years. The permit holder was issued a 12 year permit that expired in December, 2008. **Contact:** Polly Popola, 801-733-2685 or ppopola@fs.fed.us.

- **University of Utah (U of U) Research Study Proposal Permit** – the U of U research is centered on the question “How will climate change influence conifer forest distributions and carbon cycling in the Intermountain West?” Their objective is to provide a predictive basis for understanding how climate change will impact the functioning, distribution, and carbon stocks of conifer forests in the region. They are proposing a three-year study, using a combination of observational and manipulative field experiments combined with modeling and synthesis, and propose: 1) experiments in three conifer forests spanning an elevation gradient in Big Cottonwood Canyon, and 2) a general survey of forests across a climate gradient in the Wasatch and Uinta Mountains. These experiments and associated monitoring activities would generate data, modeling products and an intellectual framework for understanding the hydrologic and ecosystem processes of Big Cottonwood Canyon and similar regions of the Intermountain West region. Project results and data will be made freely available to anyone interested including land and water managers, public entities, and scientists.

Equipment and measurements: At each site (in Big Cottonwood Canyon) they propose to install a small, solar-powered weather station (10 ft. tall mast) for continuous measurement of weather, soil moisture and temperature, and tree sap flow (water use). These would be temporary stations, installed without concrete foundations, for a total of 3 or more years. Each of these stations would contain dataloggers that automatically record data from these sensors. In addition to the automated measurements, they would install a few temporary measurement devices and make manual measurements at regular intervals throughout the year. These installations and manual measurements would take place in, or adjacent to six replicate experimental plots (8 meter circles, three treatment and three control plots).

Experimental manipulations: At each site, they would accelerate the rate of the spring snowmelt cycle by 4-6 weeks on 3 of the experimental plots in each forest. They would use a portable DC leaf blower to apply a thin layer of sand to the surface of the snowpack. Sand treatments would be applied weekly during the spring snowmelt cycle, or more often as needed when snowfall events cover the sand. They would apply these treatments in the springs of 2010, 2011, and 2012. The remaining 3 untreated plots would serve as a control. The red sand that would be applied is derived from the Chinle/Moenkopi formations of southern Utah. The sand has a low spectral albedo and extremely low nutrient content. **Contact:** Steve Scheid, 801-733-2689 or sscheid@fs.fed.us.

- **UDOT Peruvian Ridge Gun Mount Replacement** - The Utah Department of Transportation is planning to replace the existing artillery facility located on Peruvian Ridge at the Alta Ski Area. UDOT inventories of 105 mm Recoilless Rifle ammunition suggest there is approximately a 3 to 5 year supply remaining and that additional ammunition of this type is unavailable. In addition to a shortage of Recoilless Rifle

ammunition, the U S Army is strongly encouraging UDOT to replace the Recoilless Rifle with a 105 mm Howitzer to address “over-head fire” concerns (firing ammunition over inhabited structures). UDOT proposes removing the present facility and replacing it with a new one. It will also be necessary to build a smaller independent tower, adjacent to the new Howitzer mount, for the Recoilless Rifle that will still be used for Ski Area avalanche control work, where “over-head fire” is not an issue. **Contact:** Steve Scheid, 801-733-2689 or sscheid@fs.fed.us.

Recreation Special Uses

- **Alta: Transfer Tow and Base Area Modifications** – This summer Alta plans on replacing many of the parts on the Cross Tow that are worn out (raising parts, sheave wheels, cross arms, etc). Along with that equipment replacement, Alta proposes to raise the ground level of the maze area and loading area of the Sunnyside Lift and east end of the Cross Tow to within two feet of snow grade. This would essentially make the bottom of Sunnyside and the east end of the Cross Tow into fixed elevation terminals. The drainage that comes out of the area north of the Cross Tow goes into a 120’x 30” culvert to take that water under the tow. Alta would like to extend the north end of that culvert 20’. The proposed project would establish a level that would work well for skiers, especially for the lower ability levels who currently have to walk or push uphill through this area. The culvert extension is requested to widen out the choke point on the ski school teaching hill. **Contact:** Steve Scheid, 801-733-2689 or sscheid@fs.fed.us
- **Solitude - Ski Run Modifications** – Solitude Proposes to remove selected trees within their beginner terrain to improve the safety and quality of the skiing experience. Same Street is Solitude’s primary beginner run and the tree islands on the run are often too confining for beginners. Solitude is also proposing to remove selected trees on Tude Dudes and Little Dollie ski runs. These ski runs intersect with Same Street and provide more advanced options for beginners and lower intermediate skiers. The tree removal is intended to help segregate the ability levels to improve circulation and reduce congestion on the beginner route and improve the overall quality in this area. **Contact:** Polly Popola, 801-733-2685 or ppopola@fs.fed.us.
- **Bair Gutsman - Recreation Event Permit Reissuance** - This proposal calls for a one-year reissuance of the recreation event permit for the Bair Gutsman Run, held in Bair Canyon, Fruit Heights, on the Salt Lake Ranger District. The permit holder has requested a change to the permit to raise the number of participants from 190 to 300. The permit holder has been issued one-year temporary permits for the past three consecutive years and is eligible for a 5 year re-issuance based on our review of the event over this period. However, with the requested change in the scope of the permit, the Salt Lake Ranger District is proposing an additional temporary one-year re-issuance to evaluate the change. **Contact:** Kevin Walton, 801-733-2670 or kawalton@fs.fed.us

How to Comment and Timeframe

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments must be received by **June 5, 2009**. Written comments must be submitted to: Salt Lake District Ranger, 6944 South 3000 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84121. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone (801) 733-2660 or in person; or at an official agency function (i.e. public meeting) that is designed to elicit public comments. Electronic comments must be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-wasatch-cache-saltlake@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

/s/ Carol Majeske (for):

CATHERINE H. KAHLOW
District Ranger