



THE SUMMIT-AT-SNOQUALMIE MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROPOSAL

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Pacific
Northwest
Region

August 2008

Record of Decision



Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie / Okanogan-Wenatchee
National Forests



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RECORD OF DECISION

The Summit-at-Snoqualmie Master Development Plan Proposal Final Environmental Impact Statement and Wenatchee National Forest Forest Plan Amendment No. 27

Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests
Snoqualmie and Cle Elum Ranger Districts
King and Kittitas Counties, Washington

October 2008

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents our Decision to authorize a combination of Alternatives 1, 3 and Modified Alternative 5 (The Selected Alternative) for implementation as described in *The Summit-at-Snoqualmie Final Environmental Impact Statement* (FEIS). Various local, state, and other federal authorizations are also required for the implementation of this project (see Table ROD-2, below).

The Summit-at-Snoqualmie is situated in the Cascade Mountain Range of western Washington, approximately 46 miles east of Seattle, in Sections 4, 5, 9, 15, 16, 21 and 22, T. 22 N, R 11 E and Sections 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32, T. 23 N, R.11E (see ROD Figure 1) and is accessed via Interstate 90 (I-90). The Summit-at-Snoqualmie is located on private land within both King and Kittitas Counties and National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Snoqualmie Ranger District of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (MBSNF) and the Cle Elum Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF). There are approximately 1,834 acres of NFS lands occupied by The Summit-at-Snoqualmie as authorized by a Special Use Permit (SUP) administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service (USFS). This ROD pertains to a federal action that affects NFS lands within the existing SUP boundary and certain private lands that are connected to this federal action.

2.0 DECISION AND REASONS FOR THE DECISION

This ROD documents our Decision to approve Modified Alternative 5 as the Selected Alternative, with the following changes (see Table ROD-1, and ROD Figures 2-4):

- No *Creek Run* chairlift or associated trails will be developed at Summit East (Section 16) per Alternative 3 (see FEIS Figure 2.3.4-1);

Rationale: The *Creek Run* chairlift and associated trails have been withdrawn from the proposal by the proponent.

- No *Pulse Gondola* will be constructed at Alpental per Alternative 3 (see FEIS Figure 2.3.4-2);

Rationale: The *Pulse Gondola* has been withdrawn from the proposal by the proponent.

- No mountain-top restaurant will be constructed at Alpental per Alternative 3 (see FEIS Figure 2.3.4-2);

Rationale: The mountain-top restaurant at Alpental has been withdrawn from the proposal by the proponent.

- No Creek Run Duty Station at Summit East or Edelweiss Duty Station at Alpental will be constructed for Ski Patrol per Alternative 3 (see FEIS Section 2.3.4.6 – Ski Patrol and First Aid, page 2-55);

Rationale: The *Creek Run* terminal and mountain-top restaurant (which would house these facilities) have been withdrawn from the proposal by the proponent.

- *Trail 49 (Summit Central-Summit East Crossover)* will remain in its current configuration per Alternative 3 (see FEIS Figure 2.3.4-1);

Rationale: The modification of *Trail 49* has been withdrawn from the proposal by the proponent.

- A trestle will be constructed on existing *Trail 49 (Summit Central-Summit East Crossover)* to cross a stream per Alternative 3 (see ROD Appendix A; MM4);

Rationale: With no improvements to *Trail 49 (Summit Central-Summit East Crossover)*, construction of a trestle on *Trail 49* will improve access to Summit East.

- The SUP area will be increased by a total of 17.01 acres, including 17.0 acres along Hyak Creek and 0.01 acre associated with a cross-country warming hut at the area known as Grand Junction per Alternative 3 (see FEIS Section 2.3.4 – Alternative 3 – Reduced Section 16 Development, FEIS page 2-53);

Rationale: With no improvements to *Trail 49 (Summit Central-Summit East Crossover)*, the 53-acre expansion of the SUP area intended to incorporate the egress area at the top of the *Silver Fir* chairlift (in Sections 16 and 17), described in Modified Alternative 5, is not necessary. The 17.01-acre expansion will accommodate the Selected Alternative.

- The *Easy Street* lift at Summit Central will remain in its current configuration per Alternative 1 (see FEIS Section 2.3.2 - Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative page 2-7, FEIS Table 2.3.2-1 page 2-8, and FEIS Figure 2.3.2-1);

Rationale: The modification of the *Easy Street* lift at Summit Central has been withdrawn from the proposal by the proponent.

- *Trails 55, 66, and 67* at Summit East will be maintained in their current state as per Alternative 1 (see FEIS Section 2.3.2.2 - Trails page 2-8, FEIS Table 2.3.2 page 2-10, 11, and FEIS Figure 2.3.2-1);

Rationale: Retention of *Trails 55, 66, and 67* will meet the need to increase the amount of intermediate and advanced-intermediate terrain at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie following the withdrawal of the *Creek Run* lift and associated trails from the proposal.

This ROD also documents an amendment to The Summit-at-Snoqualmie SUP to authorize site-specific implementation of the new Master Development Plan (MDP) based on Modified Alternative 5 in the

FEIS, and our Decision to add approximately 17.01 additional acres to the SUP area similar to Alternative 3. These actions will occur within or adjacent to the existing SUP area of The Summit-at-Snoqualmie.

Our Decision also includes a non-significant (under the National Forest Management Act [NFMA]) Forest Plan amendment to the *WNF Forest Plan* to reallocate a total of 397.01 acres of OWNF lands from AMA (ST-1 - Scenic Travel Retention) to AMA (SPAMA-RE-1 - Developed Recreation). These lands include 380 acres in the existing SUP area, 17 acres in the SUP adjustment, and 0.01 acre at the existing cross-country warming hut, as described for Alternative 3 (see FEIS Section 2.3.4 – Alternative 3 – Reduced Section 16 Development page 2-53).

ROD Figures 2-4 depict the Selected Alternative. The actions included under the Selected Alternative will occur within or adjacent to the existing SUP area boundary of The Summit-at-Snoqualmie. The Selected Alternative will be the MDP that guides The Summit-at-Snoqualmie's development over the next 10-15 years.

The Selected Alternative will become the MDP for The Summit-at-Snoqualmie as required by clause 1G Master Development Plan of their permit. Any future changes that the ski area may propose to the MDP will need to be accepted by the USFS, and the MDP will need to be amended. Prior to implementation of these changes approved in an amendment, the appropriate analysis will need to be completed as required by NEPA.

2.1 Selected Alternative

We have decided that The Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP will include the lift and trail network, buildings and other facilities and infrastructure as summarized below, and presented in Table ROD-1 (see ROD Figures 2-4).

Under the Selected Alternative, the entire Summit-at-Snoqualmie would operate 27 lifts, including 21 lifts at The Summit and 6 lifts at Alpentel. At full build-out, six of The Summit-at-Snoqualmie's existing chairlifts will remain in their current state: *Silver Fir*¹, *Armstrong Express*, *Central Express*, *Easy Street*, *Pacific Crest*, and *Mt. Hyak*². Eleven chairlifts will be realigned or upgraded under the Selected Alternative and nine new lifts will be constructed, including eight at The Summit and one at Alpentel. The trail network at The Summit will increase by approximately 48 acres, from the existing 70 named trails on approximately 545 acres, to 78 trails on approximately 586 acres. The trail network at Alpentel

¹ The replacement and upgrade of the *Silver Fir* chairlift to a detachable quad was approved under a Categorical Exclusion in 2008 (USFS 2008). Although it has not actually been replaced as of this ROD, the approved Silver Fir chairlift is considered an existing condition in the ROD.

² Replacement of the existing *Mt. Hyak* chairlift at Summit East was approved in 2000 (Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact – Summit West Ski Area Ski Rental and Welcome Center, October 25, 2000). Replacement of the chairlift includes removal of the existing *Keechelus* and *Dinosaur* chairlifts. For purposes of this Decision, the absence of the *Keechelus* and *Dinosaur* lifts, and realignment of *Mt. Hyak* is considered an existing condition, although the *Mt. Hyak* chairlift has not yet been constructed.

will increase by approximately 11 acres, from the existing 25 named trails on approximately 206 acres to 27 trails on approximately 217 acres. Development of the *Rampart* lift and associated trails will correct deficiencies in intermediate and advanced intermediate terrain at The Summit by improving fall-line skiing at Summit East. In addition, the installation of the *Internationale* lift will enhance the skier experience by allowing round trip skiing in the Internationale basin without having to access the *Armstrong Express* lift (see FEIS Section 3.11 – Recreation page 3-231, 232, and Section 4.11 – Recreation page 4-608 – 4-609).

The Selected Alternative will result in an adjustment of the SUP area to include 17.01 additional acres of Section 16, adjacent to and south of the existing SUP area (see ROD Figure 2), including Hyak Creek and the cross-country hut at Grand Junction (approximately 500 feet west of Hyak Lake, occupying roughly 0.01 acre).³

The night skiing terrain at The Summit under the Selected Alternative will include lighting 22 new trails on approximately 140 acres of additional terrain. Under the Selected Alternative at The Summit, night skiing will be expanded to include all the runs in the *Mill Creek*, *Silver Fir*, and *Easy Street* pods. The *Rampart* pod will include existing night lighting (at Summit East) and expanded night terrain near the bottom of the *Rampart* lift. All new night lighting installation will include low-glare, directional lights. At Alpentel, night skiing will be expanded to include the runs along the northern edge of the *Internationale* pod, lighting 3 new trails on approximately 17 acres (see FEIS Figure 2.3.3-4).

Under the Selected Alternative, The Summit-at-Snoqualmie will increase parking by 9.8 acres (from 47.4 to 57.2 acres) at parking lots and along State Route 906 at Summit West. Parking lots on NFS lands, which include Alpentel lots 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, Summit West lots 1, 2, and the maintenance shop lot area, and approximately half of Silver Fir lot 1 (the portion located on NFS lands) will be paved under the Selected Alternative.

New facilities will include a mountain-top restaurant at Summit East to be constructed adjacent to the upper terminal of the *Mt. Hyak* chairlift. The 5,000-square foot facility will provide 250 restaurant seats. At Summit Central the base lodge and rental shop/learning center will be removed and a new 60,000-square foot facility will be constructed. This facility will be constructed downslope of the existing day lodge and will include approximately 1,700 restaurant seats.

Table ROD-1 shows a summary comparison of our Decision (the Selected Alternative), with the current, existing condition. Table 2.7-1 of the FEIS presents the project components under the Action Alternatives

³ Prior to the acquisition of the ski area by Ski Lifts, Inc., Ski Acres and Hyak ski areas operated under separate SUPs that provided separate operations. The SUP areas were separated by Hyak Creek, which was not included in either permit area. With the purchase of Hyak and Ski Acres by Ski Lifts, Inc., the ski area operations were no longer separate. This amendment ties the SUP areas together, consistent with Ski Lifts, Inc.'s current use of the area.

that were evaluated. A summary of the environmental consequences of the entire range of alternatives is presented in Table 2.7-2 of the FEIS (see FEIS page 2-95).

**Table ROD-1:
Summary Comparison of Existing Facilities to the Selected Alternative**

Master Plan Components	Existing	Selected Alternative
Alpentel		
Alpine Ski Area Capacity (CCC) ⁴	1,880	2,620
The Summit		
Alpine Ski Area Capacity (CCC)	8,140	9,990
Total SUP Area (acres)	1,834	1,851 (+17)
Lifts⁵⁶		
Alpentel		
Total Number of Lifts	5	6
Number of Chairlifts	4	5
Number of Surface Lifts	1	1
<i>Armstrong Express</i>	Existing	Existing
<i>Drei</i>	Existing	Removed
<i>Edelweiss</i>	Existing	Modified
<i>Internationale</i>	Non Existent	Proposed
<i>Magic Carpet</i>	Non Existent	Proposed
<i>Sessel</i>	Existing	Modified
<i>St. Bernard</i>	Existing	Modified
The Summit		
Total Number of Lifts	20	21
Number of Chairlifts	16	17
Number of Surface Lifts	4	4
<i>Baby Double</i>	Non Existent	Proposed
<i>Backside</i>	Existing	Removed
<i>Bunny</i>	Existing	Removed
<i>Central Express</i>	Existing	Existing
<i>Dodge Ridge</i>	Existing	Modified
<i>Easy Gold</i>	Existing	Modified
<i>Easy Rider</i>	Existing	Removed
<i>Easy Street</i>	Existing	Existing
<i>Gallery</i>	Existing	Removed
<i>Holiday</i>	Existing	Modified
<i>Julie's Chair</i>	Existing	Modified
<i>Little Thunder</i>	Existing	Modified
<i>Magic Carpet I</i>	Existing	Modified
<i>Magic Carpet II</i>	Existing	Modified

⁴ CCC = Comfortable Carrying Capacity

⁵ The modification of existing lifts includes the realignment and/or changes in length.

⁶ Non existent lifts are lifts that would not constructed, Removed lifts are lifts that currently exist but would be removed under the Selected Alternative.

**Table ROD-1:
Summary Comparison of Existing Facilities to the Selected Alternative**

Master Plan Components	Existing	Selected Alternative
<i>Mill Creek</i>	Non Existent	Proposed
<i>Mt. Hyak</i>	Existing	Existing
<i>Northside</i>	Non Existent	Proposed
<i>Pacific Crest</i>	Existing	Existing
<i>Rampart</i>	Non Existent	Proposed
<i>Reggie's Chair</i>	Existing	Removed
<i>Rope Tow</i>	Existing	Removed
<i>Silver Fir</i>	Existing	Existing
<i>Ski School</i>	Non Existent	Proposed
<i>Surface Lift I</i>	Non Existent	Proposed
<i>Surface Lift II</i>	Non Existent	Proposed
<i>Triple 60</i>	Existing	Modified
<i>Wildside</i>	Existing	Modified
Ski Trails⁷⁸		
Alpental		
Number of Trails	25	27
Formal Terrain (acres)	206	217
Trail Number		
1	Existing	Existing
2	Existing	Existing
3	Existing	Modified
4	Existing	Existing
5	Existing	Existing
6	Existing	Existing
7	Existing	Modified
8	Existing	Existing
9	Existing	Existing
10	Existing	Existing
11	Existing	Existing
12	Existing	Existing
13	Existing	Existing
14	Existing	Existing
15	Existing	Existing
16	Existing	Existing
17	Existing	Existing
18	Existing	Existing
19	Existing	Existing
20	Existing	Modified
20A	Non Existent	Proposed

⁷ Modified ski trails includes trails where blasting/grading/clearing, widening, lengthening or shortening, or realignment occurs as a result of MDP component implementation.

⁸ Non Existent ski trails are trails that have been removed or have not been identified as a designated ski trail.

**Table ROD-1:
Summary Comparison of Existing Facilities to the Selected Alternative**

Master Plan Components	Existing	Selected Alternative
21	Existing	Existing
21A	Non Existent	Proposed
22	Existing	Existing
23	Existing	Existing
25	Existing	Existing
69	Existing	Existing
The Summit		
Number of Trails	70	75
Formal Terrain (acres)	545	551
Trail Number		
1	Existing	Modified
2	Existing	Modified
3	Existing	Modified
4	Existing	Modified
4A	Non Existent	Proposed
5	Existing	Modified
6	Existing	Removed
7	Existing	Existing
8	Existing	Existing
9	Existing	Modified
9A	Non Existent	Proposed
10	Existing	Existing
11	Existing	Modified
12	Existing	Modified
12A	Non Existent	Proposed
12B	Non Existent	Proposed
13	Existing	Modified
13B	Non Existent	Proposed
14	Existing	Existing
15	Existing	Modified
16	Existing	Existing
17	Existing	Existing
18	Existing	Existing
18A	Non Existent	Proposed
19	Existing	Modified
20	Existing	Existing
21	Existing	Modified
22	Existing	Existing
23	Existing	Modified
24	Existing	Existing
25	Existing	Modified
26	Existing	Modified

**Table ROD-1:
Summary Comparison of Existing Facilities to the Selected Alternative**

Master Plan Components	Existing	Selected Alternative
27	Existing	Modified
28	Existing	Removed
29	Existing	Modified
30	Existing	Modified
31	Existing	Modified
32	Existing	Existing
33	Existing	Existing
34	Existing	Existing
35	Existing	Existing
36	Existing	Existing
37	Existing	Existing
38	Existing	Existing
39	Existing	Existing
40	Existing	Existing
41	Existing	Existing
42	Existing	Existing
43	Existing	Modified
44	Existing	Modified
45	Existing	Existing
46	Existing	Modified
49	Existing	Modified
50	Existing	Removed
51	Existing	Modified
51A	Non Existent	Proposed
51B	Non Existent	Proposed
51C	Non Existent	Proposed
51E	Non Existent	Proposed
52	Existing	Modified
52A	Non Existent	Proposed
52B	Non Existent	Proposed
52C	Non Existent	Proposed
52D	Non Existent	Proposed
52E	Non Existent	Proposed
53	Existing	Removed
54	Existing	Modified
55	Existing	Existing
56	Existing	Modified
57	Existing	Revegetated
58	Existing	Modified
59	Existing	Modified
60	Existing	Modified
60A	Non Existent	Proposed

**Table ROD-1:
Summary Comparison of Existing Facilities to the Selected Alternative**

Master Plan Components	Existing	Selected Alternative
60B	Non Existent	Proposed
61	Existing	Modified
62	Existing	Modified
63	Existing	Existing
64	Existing	Removed
65	Existing	Existing
66	Existing	Existing
67	Existing	Existing
68	Existing	Existing
69	Existing	Removed
70	Existing	Removed
71	Existing	Relocated
72	Existing	Removed
Revegetation of Tree Islands ⁹	No	Yes
Night Skiing		
Alpental		
Total Trails	12	15
Available Terrain (acres)	95	112
Capacity (skiers)	1,550	2,170
The Summit		
Total Trails	54	76
Available Terrain (acres)	420	580
Capacity (skiers)	6,210	9,870
Parking (acres)		
Alpental		
Lot 1	0.8	0.8
Lot 2	1.9	1.9
Lot 3	0.9	0.9
Lot 4	0.6	0.6
Lot 5	0.9	0.9
Lot 6	2.5	2.5
Lot 7	0.2	0.2
Subtotal Alpental (acres)	7.8	7.8
The Summit		
Summit West, First Western	1.8	8
Summit West, SR 906	2.3	4.3
Summit West Lot 1	5.2	0.1
Summit West Lot 2	4.3	1.8
Summit West Maintenance Lot	Non Existent	2.3
Summit Central Lot 1	10.9	10.9

⁹ Under the Selected Alternative, tree islands will be revegetated as illustrated in ROD Figure 2.

**Table ROD-1:
Summary Comparison of Existing Facilities to the Selected Alternative**

Master Plan Components	Existing	Selected Alternative
Summit Central Lot 2	4.2	4.2
Silver Fir Lot 1	2.7	2.7
Silver Fir Lot 2	1.4	3.6
Silver Fir Lot 3	1.3	1.3
Silver Fir Lot 4	Non Existent	4.8
Summit East Lot 1	1.8	1.8
Summit East Lot 2	2.6	2.6
Summit East Lot 3	1.1	1.1
Subtotal Summit (acres)	39.6	49.5
The Summit-at-Snoqualmie		
Total (acres)	47.4	57.3
Parking Capacity (people)	12,346	14,786
Parking Requirement (people)	12,800	16,630
Parking Deficit	454	1,844
Support Facilities		
Alpental		
Guest Services Buildings (sq. ft.)	20,688	34,688
Visitor Service Building	Non Existent	Proposed
Food Service Seats	528	528
Maintenance Building (sq. ft.)	2,754	3,682
Ski Patrol Stations (number)	3	3
Total Ski Patrol Stations (sq. ft.)	1,516	1,935
The Summit		
Guest Services Buildings (sq. ft.)	97,566	174,720
Alpenhaus/Slide in Lodge	Existing	Renovated
Thunderbird Lodge	Existing	Renovated
Summit Central Base Lodge	Non Existent	Proposed
Silver Fir Base Lodge	Existing	Renovated
Mountain-top Restaurant	Non Existent	Proposed
Food Service Seats	1,386	4,234
Maintenance Building (sq. ft.)	12,317	21,127
Ski Patrol Stations (number)	9	8
Total Ski Patrol Stations (sq. ft.)	4,527	5,514
Ski Patrol Stations (number)	9	8
Utilities		
Alpental		
Average Water Demand (gpd) Capacity = 620,640 (gpd)	28,000 (below capacity)	30,916 (below capacity)
Water Storage Capacity	100,000-gallon storage tank	No Change
Wastewater Disposal	SPUD – Sufficient Capacity	SPUD – Sufficient Capacity

**Table ROD-1:
Summary Comparison of Existing Facilities to the Selected Alternative**

Master Plan Components	Existing	Selected Alternative
Power Demand (mw)	The existing power system at Alpentel has the capacity to accommodate all proposed lifts, lighting, and facilities.	
Fuel Storage (gallons)	2,000	No Change
Number of Fuel Tanks	2	2 – Tanks would be re-located to the new Maintenance Facility
The Summit		
Average Water Demand (gpd)	93,500	117,882
Capacity = 465,000 gallons	(below capacity)	(below capacity)
Wastewater Disposal	SPUD –	SPUD –
	Sufficient Capacity	Sufficient Capacity
Power Demand (mw)	The existing power system at The Summit has the capacity to accommodate all proposed lifts, lighting, and facilities.	
Fuel Storage (gallons)	17,000	No Change
Number of Fuel Tanks	4	4 – Two 4,000-gallon tanks at Summit West would be re-located to the new Maintenance Facility
Roads		
Road Network Density (mi/mi ²)	4.86	4.79
Road Network (miles) ¹⁰	22	21.35
Proposed Roads (miles)	0	0.58

2.2 Other Elements of the Decision

2.2.1 Non-Significant Forest Plan Amendment

We are amending the *WNF Forest Plan* in accordance with the USFS planning regulations provided in 36 CFR 219.7, 219.8, and 219.14. We are amending the *WNF Forest Plan* to correct allocations within the existing SUP boundary and adjustments to the boundary included in this Decision (see ROD Section 2.1 – Summary of the Selected Alternative). We elect to use the option in 36 CFR 219.14 (b)(2) to use the provisions of the 1982 planning regulations to guide the amendment.

This Decision includes a non-significant Forest Plan amendment, which will add a total of 17.01 acres to the SUP area, including Hyak Creek and the cross-country hut at Grand Junction (approximately 500 feet west of Hyak Lake, occupying roughly 0.01 acre). The adjustment will incorporate Hyak Creek into the SUP area and provide for use of existing *Trail 49*, as well as construction and use of *Trail 71* between Summit East and Summit Central. The Forest Plan amendment also includes reallocating a total of 397.01 acres of OWNF lands from AMA (ST-1 - Scenic Travel) to AMA (SPAMA-RE-1 - Developed

¹⁰ Reduction in Road Network and Density is due to implementation of the watershed restoration projects (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan) authorized by the Selected Alternative.

Recreation) to be more consistent with the existing and proposed use of the land. These lands include 380 acres in the existing SUP area, 17 acres in the SUP area adjustment, and 0.01 acre at the existing cross-country warming hut.

The amendment is considered a non-significant Forest Plan amendment under NFMA on the basis of criteria outlined in FSM 1926.51 – *Changes to the Forest Plan That Are Not Significant* (see FEIS Section 1.1.2.2 – The Proposed Action page 1-16). Changes to the Forest Plan that are not significant can result from:

1. Actions that do not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management;
2. Adjustments of management area boundaries or management prescriptions resulting from further on-site analysis when the adjustments do not cause significant changes in the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management;
3. Minor changes in standards and guidelines; and,
4. Opportunities for additional management practices that will contribute to achievement of the management prescription.

Within the existing 1,834-acre SUP area, 380 acres of OWNF lands are allocated to AMA (ST-1 – Scenic Travel), which is not consistent with their existing inclusion in the ski area SUP boundary and the current presence/operation of ski area facilities within them. Presently, the *Silver Fir* chairlift and trails, *Summit East-Summit Central Crossover* trails, and roads are located on this portion of the SUP area (see FEIS Section 4.14.2.1 – Lands within The Summit-at-Snoqualmie Study Area page 4-652). Therefore, designation of this area as AMA (SPAMA-RE-1 – Developed Recreation) will be the most consistent with its use and its presence within the SUP area. The Plan Amendment will place the land in the appropriate management prescription for ski areas and will not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management (FSM 1922.51-1). The Plan Amendment will not result in a change in standards and guidelines.

This Plan Amendment would affect 397.01 acres, of which 380 acres are currently within the SUP, and 17.01 acres have been added to the SUP by this Decision. The 397.01 acres are within the approved 1,851-acre SUP area and are included within the 2,899-acre Study Area and the 133,995-acre 5th field analysis area. The WNF Forest Plan encompasses a total of 2.2 million acres, and this amendment only applies to the 397.01 acres described above, which equates to less than 0.0001 percent of land allocated in the WNF Forest Plan. The WNF Forest Plan allocates 6,614 acres to AMA (SPAMA-RE-1 - Developed Recreation) and 83,635 acres to AMA (ST-1 - Scenic Travel). Under this Plan Amendment, a total of 7,011 acres would be allocated to RE-1 (an increase of 5.7 percent) and 83,238 acres would be allocated

to ST-1 (a decrease of 0.48 percent). From a visual standpoint, both management areas emphasize the retention of visual quality and other standards and guidelines within both management areas are similar, as both are managed under the SPAMA standards and guidelines.

This Plan Amendment does not allocate the 390-acre Mill Creek land donation to RE-1 (see ROD Section 2.2.2 – Mitigation, Management Requirements and Other Management Provisions, below).

2.2.2 Mitigation, Management Requirements and Other Management Provisions

All of the mitigation measures, management requirements and other management provisions, listed in ROD Appendix A, are included as part of the Selected Alternative and part of our Decision. These mitigation measures, management requirements and other management provisions are required by the USFS to avoid or minimize potential environmental harm associated with implementing the Selected Alternative on NFS lands. Ski Lifts, Inc., as the permittee, is the party responsible for their implementation. If Ski Lifts, Inc. elects to initiate the construction and operation of any action authorized by this ROD, all of the applicable mitigation measures, management requirements and other management provisions are required to be implemented. Because of the length of Table ROD-A-1, and to make it easier for the reader and the staff who will be implementing these projects, the table is included in ROD Appendix A.

Mitigation Measure MM2 requires The Summit-at-Snoqualmie to donate approximately 390 acres of private land in the Mill Creek watershed for inclusion in the OWNF. The 390 acres will be managed for LSH, and will mitigate the impacts occurring within Riparian Reserves and Section 16 due to the Selected Alternative.¹¹ The mitigation measure, as described in the FEIS, does not require a specific land allocation to be prescribed to the 390-acre land donation, but calls for management for LSH. This decision will allocate the land to AMA (ST-1 - Scenic Travel).

2.2.3 Restoration, Management Plans and Monitoring

We have decided that execution of the following plans will insure the implementation of the Selected Alternative will be carried out consistent with the analysis in the FEIS, including restoration, management and monitoring:

- Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan (FEIS Appendix F)
- Stormwater Management Plan (FEIS Appendix G)

¹¹ Late-successional habitat (LSH) is forested habitat in its mature stage, also called late-seral stage forest. Typical characteristics are moderate to high canopy closure, a multilayered and multispecies canopy dominated by large overstory trees, numerous large snags, and abundant coarse woody debris on the ground. SPAMA places management emphasis on maintaining or enhancing LSH while retaining flexibility in AMAs (USFS and USFWS 1997b).

The Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan (FEIS Appendix F) includes 54 restoration projects (including slope stabilization, road deactivation, revegetation, wetland restoration and stream restoration projects) that are intended to be implemented during the construction of approved facilities to improve watershed conditions in Upper South Fork Snoqualmie and Coal Creek watersheds (see FEIS Appendix F Section 5.0 – Restoration pages F-45 – F-60).

The Implementation, Operation, Restoration and Monitoring Plan (FEIS Appendix F) will aid in verifying the cumulative effects of the MDP as well as other human-induced and natural disturbances within the Upper South Fork Snoqualmie and Coal Creek watersheds (see Section 6.0 – Monitoring of Appendix F). Accordingly, the “USFS may elect to withhold approval of subsequent construction phases until mitigation and monitoring indicate that the effects have been reduced to an acceptable level” see FEIS Appendix F Section 6.4 – Annual Monitoring Report page F-70) .

2.2.4 Implementation of the Selected Alternative

2.2.4.1 Planning and Permitting

An Annual Construction Plan will be prepared by Ski Lifts, Inc. and approved by the USFS for each construction season or phase. Detailed construction plans will be developed for each facet of the project, including tree removal activities, lift and trail construction, utility installation and revegetation. A topographic base of the project site will be developed at an appropriate scale in order to create the construction plans. In addition, the wetlands and streams in the project area will be delineated and a confirmation will be obtained, if appropriate, from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prior to the start of construction. Sensitive areas (e.g., wetlands, streams, special status species locations) in the vicinity of the project site will be flagged in the field and surveyed, as necessary. In accordance with the mitigation measures, management requirements and other management provisions (see ROD Appendix A), impacts to these sensitive areas from the Selected Alternative will be avoided and/or minimized to the greatest extent practicable during the planning and implementation phases.

In addition, construction will be scheduled to minimize impacts to biological and physical resources. Specifically, construction of facilities involving major ground disturbance will take place during the dry season (generally summer and fall) to the greatest extent possible and removal of downed trees will be done over the snow where mechanical removal is not practicable (see FEIS Table 2.4.1 page 2-65). Once detailed construction documents are developed for the Selected Alternative or phase of the Selected Alternative, all necessary permits and approvals will be acquired from the regulatory agencies identified in Table ROD-2. A SWPPP will be prepared by Ski Lifts, Inc. to provide documentation for, and to obtain a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit for all of the activities in the construction plan, as required. The SWPPP will include the development of project-specific Best Management Practices (BMPs). Project-specific mitigation measures, management requirements, and other management provisions from ROD Appendix A and permit conditions from all construction permits

will be incorporated into construction documents and permit applications when judged necessary by the regulatory agencies. The SWPPP will be reviewed and agreed to by the USFS. Planning and permitting will be conducted during a 6 to 12-month period prior to the construction season.

**Table ROD-2:
Summary of Permits, Approvals and Consultation**

Agency	Action/Regulation	Description of Permit/Action
Federal		
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	USACE Permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (U.S.C. 1344)	Authorization for discharge of dredged/fill material into wetlands and other waters of the U.S.
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C.A. Section 7410-762 (PL 95-604, PL 95-95) Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by the Clean Water Act (U.S.C. 1344) Safe Drinking Water Act, 452 U.S.C.A. Section 300F-300J-10 (PL 93-523)	Provide review and comments on the “federal action.” Provide information and technical assistance in the environmental analysis.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Section 7 Consultation and Biological Opinion USACE Section 404 Permit Consultation	Protection of Threatened and Endangered Species (see Section 1.6.2 – Interagency Coordination). Consultation under the Fish and Wildlife Act.
State		
Washington Department of Ecology	Stormwater Permit	Control of stormwater discharges at construction sites.
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Hydraulic Project Approval	Authorize development projects and in State waters (i.e., culverts).
Local		
King and Kittitas County Code Compliance	Building Permit	Authorize construction of buildings
Snoqualmie Pass Utility District	Utility Connection Permits	Hookups to water and sewer for new facilities proposed under the MDP.

2.2.4.2 *Annual Monitoring Plan*

The Annual Monitoring Plan will be prepared by Ski Lifts, Inc. and approved by the USFS. This plan will include a summary of the project activities in the construction plan, a list of permit conditions and applicable mitigation measures, management requirements, and other management provisions (see ROD - Appendix A) to be applied in each project, and guidelines for the site-scale monitoring to be performed. Annual monitoring will include all elements discussed in the mitigation measures, management requirements, and other management practices as specified in the FEIS (see FEIS Section 2.4 - Mitigation page 2-64, and FEIS Table 2.4-2 page 2-68) and SWPPP. Ski Lifts, Inc. will complete the Annual

Monitoring Plan three to six months prior to the construction season; it will be approved by the USFS prior to construction activities.

The Annual Monitoring Plan will also combine the elements of the Individual Monitoring Plans (see Section 2.3.6 - Implementation of Individual Project Monitoring Plans) for all stages of the projects to be implemented in the upcoming construction year so that monitoring efforts can be organized in an efficient manner.

2.2.4.3 Construction Implementation and Monitoring

Once the necessary permits and approvals are obtained and the Construction Plan has been reviewed and approved by the USFS, construction will begin in accordance with the approved Annual Construction Plan, SWPPP, conditions outlined in agency permits, and the Annual Monitoring Plan.

Monitoring specified in the Annual Monitoring Plan will ensure that permit conditions are being followed properly for all work during the construction year. Erosion control, water quality, and other monitoring will be performed according to the SWPPP and Monitoring Plan during the active construction phase and will be discontinued once the construction is complete and the sites have been declared stabilized by the USFS. Monitoring will be funded by Ski Lifts, Inc. and will be carried out by Ski Lifts, Inc. or outside monitoring consultants as approved by the USFS and as specified in the Annual Monitoring Plan. All monitoring efforts will include oversight from the USFS. If monitoring indicates that construction activities have exceeded thresholds or conditions established in the mitigation measures, management requirements, other management provisions or other permit requirements (see ROD Appendix A), the USFS will issue a stop work order for those construction activities that have been deemed responsible for the exceedences. Additional BMPs or other remedial actions will be taken as described in the mitigation measures, management requirements, other management provisions or other permit requirements (see ROD Appendix A), all of which will be included in the project-specific SWPPPs. Upon approval of these remedial actions, Ski Lifts, Inc. will be allowed to continue construction activities that have been stopped. Monitoring efforts for all construction and restoration projects will be tracked in a database by Ski Lifts, Inc. to ensure that all monitoring requirements, permit conditions, management requirements, other management provisions, and mitigation measures are implemented in an organized and efficient fashion (see ROD Appendix A).

2.2.4.4 Annual Monitoring Report

Subsequent to each construction season following the first phase of construction, the Annual Monitoring Report will be prepared by Ski Lifts, Inc. This report will contain a summary of the results of the previous year's monitoring. Information from the Annual Monitoring Reports will be used by Ski Lifts, Inc and/or the USFS to alter or supplement the current list of Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions (see ROD Appendix A). Based on the results of the Annual Monitoring Report, the USFS may elect to withhold approval of subsequent construction phases until monitoring

indicates that the effects have been reduced to an acceptable level. Similarly, other regulatory agencies may elect to halt onsite activities to insure that permit conditions are satisfactorily met (see FEIS Section 1.7 - Permits, Approvals, and Consultations Required page 1-59, and FEIS Table 1.7-1 page 1-59)

2.2.4.5 Site Stabilization

The project site will be stabilized after completion of each project phase (e.g., clearing, grading, and lift construction). Inspection of the completed project site will be performed by the USFS to determine if the site is stable and that the construction plan, SWPPP, and monitoring plan have been carried out to completion. If the project site has not been stabilized properly, the USFS will provide an inspection report and recommend steps that should be taken to stabilize the site. Monitoring of the project site will continue according to the Annual Monitoring Plan until the site has been properly stabilized and approved by the USFS (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan Section 6.2 – Annual Monitoring Plan page F-62). Documentation of site stabilization will be provided in the Annual Monitoring report.

2.2.5 Required Monitoring

Our Decision includes the incorporation of all monitoring requirements, as listed under the Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements and Other Management Provisions (see ROD - Appendix A) and the implementation process described in ROD Section 2.2.4 – Implementation of the Selected Alternative. The objectives are to monitor the implementation of BMPs and the effectiveness of mitigation. The plan requires monitoring at the project scale.

In addition to the monitoring requirements, the USFS will continue to conduct regular monitoring and administration of other aspects of the management and operation of The Summit-at-Snoqualmie Ski Area as required under the terms and conditions of the SUP. Approval of projects is contingent upon successful mitigation and monitoring results.

2.3 Rationale for Our Decision

We considered many factors when deciding on the Selected Alternative, including issues raised during public scoping for the project; the ability to meet the Purpose and Need for the expansion; consistency with Forest Plan management direction, relevant laws, regulations, and policy directives; comments received from the public during the extended 60-day comment period for the DEIS, and environmental impacts. We believe the Selected Alternative achieves the best balance between meeting public expectations for quality alpine skiing and dispersed recreation at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie, while reducing or avoiding potential environmental impacts through environmentally sensitive planning, effective Mitigation Measures and monitoring requirements. Our detailed reasons for choosing the Selected Alternative are provided in the following sections.

2.3.1 Purpose and Need

We believe that the Selected Alternative will best meet the Purpose and Need as described in the FEIS (see FEIS Section 1.1.2.3 – Purpose and Need page 1-17). The Selected Alternative will improve the winter recreational opportunities at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie Ski Area by: 1.) Improving circulation and dispersal of skiers and other site visitors in and out of the base area, and throughout the ski area through improvements to parking, facilities, and circulation and dispersal of skiers on the slopes; 2.) Maintaining the viability of Summit East by integrating Summit East with Summit Central and Summit West by installing strategically designed and placed lifts and connector trails; 3.) Balancing the capacities of skier service facilities and lift/trail capacities by consolidating base area operations and providing on-mountain facilities to accommodate the increasing number of skiers; 4.) Implementing watershed restoration projects to improve the watershed condition; and 5.) Adjusting the SUP boundaries and allocations within the existing SUP boundary for more efficient administration. The purpose of and need for action is described in detail in FEIS Section 1.1.2.3 – Purpose and Need (see FEIS page 1-17). The needs described in the FEIS are presented below, along with the rationale for our Decision.

There is a need to improve circulation and dispersal of skiers and other site visitors in and out of the base area, and throughout the ski area.

The Selected Alternative corrects the circulation and facility problems related to development that resulted from combining three ski areas that previously operated independently of each other. The existing facilities, lifts and trails at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie were not originally designed to accommodate skier circulation and balanced capacity between the ski areas (see FEIS Section 1.1.2.3 – Purpose and Need page 1-18). The result of the past independent growth is base area congestion, poor dispersal of skiers, and long lift line waits during peak use days. In addition, the history of trail clearing at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie has left slopes cleared, with few tree islands (see FEIS Illustration 3.11-1 page 3-230). The resulting landscape does not provide separation between beginner areas/trails and more advanced terrain. Skiers are required to cross active runs to reach base terminals and facilities, further impeding circulation and causing long lift lines (see FEIS Section 3.11.3 – Developed Winter Recreation page 3-229).

We believe the Selected Alternative provides better circulation and dispersal of skiers within the SUP area by creating on-mountain visitor service facilities, realigning or replacing inefficient lifts and trails, and modifying slope gradients in beginner terrain (see FEIS Section 4.11.3 – Impacts – Alternative 3, pages 4-614 – 4-615). The on-mountain restaurants at Summit East and Summit West, and the expanded Silver Fir base area will provide eating alternatives other than the Summit Central and Summit West base areas, thereby dispersing skiers throughout the SUP area (see FEIS Section 4.11.2 – Impacts Alternative 2 [Proposed Action] pages 4-606 – 4-607, Section 4.11.3 – Impacts – Alternative 3 pages 4-614 – 4-615, and Section 4.11.5 – Impacts – Modified Alternative 5 page 4-621 - 4-622). Replacement of old, inefficient chairlifts (e.g., *Triple 60* at Summit Central) and realignment of redundant lifts will improve

circulation and decrease the crowding, lift lines and crowded slope conditions during peak use days. Revegetation of tree islands will also give better separation between beginner areas and more advanced terrain (see Table ROD-1 and ROD Figure 2). Further, development of the *Rampart* pod will take advantage of existing under-utilized terrain, provide a unique skiing experience, and additional terrain for better dispersal of skiers. The addition of the *Rampart* lift at Summit East will take advantage of the fall line that skiers must traverse under the existing condition. As a result the *Rampart* pod will provide more enjoyable round-trip skiing in a forested setting, thus drawing skier demand from Summit Central and Summit West (see FEIS Section 4.11.3 - Impacts – Alternative 3 pages 4-614 – 4-615).

At Alpental the addition of the visitor service building will reduce congestion at the existing day lodge by placing guest services in a separate building. The addition of the *Internationale* chairlift will dramatically reduce skier crowding at the base of the *Armstrong Express* chairlift by providing round-trip skiing in the *Internationale* basin without having to ride the *Armstrong Express*. In addition, the re-aligned *Sessel* lift will provide direct access to the *Internationale* lift from the base, further reducing pressure on *Armstrong Express* (see FEIS Section 4.11.2 – Impacts – Alternative 2 [Proposed Action] pages 4-608 – 4-609).

There is a need to maintain the viability of Summit East by consolidation with Summit Central and Summit West.

The Selected Alternative integrates Summit East with Summit Central and Summit West by installing strategically designed and placed lifts and connector trails. The existing trail system, particularly the *Summit Central-Summit East Crossover* and *Summit East-Summit Central Crossover*, inhibit efficient skier circulation between The Summit base areas. Current slope gradients make it difficult for snowboarders to efficiently travel between Summit Central and Summit East. These flat slopes require skiers to “pole” along the trail and snowboarders to walk (see FEIS Section 3.11.3 – Developed Winter Recreation page 3-231). The Selected Alternative includes improvements to the crossover trail (*Trail 71*) between Summit East and Summit Central with more appropriate gradients allowing a wider spectrum of guests to traverse between the resort areas. Our Decision does not include re-routing *Trail 49* (as in Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 5) because the proponent has withdrawn it from consideration. Therefore, our Decision includes a trestle across Hyak Creek on the existing *Trail 49* as described in Alternative 3 (see ROD Appendix A; MM4) to reduce the effect of the gully on skiers and snowboarders who must negotiate an uphill slope in the area on the way to Summit East from Summit Central. The re-location of *Trail 71* will provide more appropriate slope gradients for guests leaving Summit East for Summit Central (see FEIS Section 4.11.2 – Impacts – Alternative 2 [Proposed Action] page 4-606 – 4-607 and ROD Figure 2).

The addition of the Summit East restaurant and the Silver Fir base area will provide an alternative to eating in the Summit Central base area. The addition of ticket sales at Summit East and improved parking at the Silver Fir base area will allow for skiers to choose an alternative portal during the morning arrival, which will also improve utilization of Summit East. We believe that the combination of expanded skiing

terrain, and new guest service facilities will help integrate the Summit East area by improving the lifts and facilities, and therefore options (i.e., the opportunity to use Summit East) for skiers at The Summit (see FEIS Section 4.11.3 – Impacts – Alternative 3 page 4-614 - 615).

There is a need to balance the capacities of skier service facilities and lift/trail capacities.

Guest Services/Building Space

We believe the Selected Alternative achieves the best increase in capacities of skier service facilities and lift/trail capacities while reducing or avoiding potential environmental impacts through environmentally sensitive planning, effective mitigation measures and monitoring requirements. The existing guest services and building space at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie reflect the time when the ski areas operated independently of each other. As a result, skier access to guest services at The Summit is limited due to an absence of on-mountain facilities and a lack of primary core areas for guest services (see FEIS Section 1.1.2.3 – Purpose and Need page 1-18).

We are convinced that the consolidation of base area operations into two primary core areas (Summit West and Summit Central) and one secondary core area (Silver Fir) in conjunction with improvements in the lift and trail system (e.g., the installation and realignment of high-speed lifts coupled with improved crossover trail [*Trail 71*]) will improve skier distribution throughout the ski areas by making the layout more understandable and having services available to users at these base areas (see FEIS Section 4.11.3 – Impacts – Alternative 3 page 4-614 - 615). We believe that by enhancing skier dispersal and creating these primary core areas, our Decision allows the resort to better accommodate skiers on busy days.

Our Decision also includes additional restaurant seats throughout the ski area. The construction of food service seating at the Summit East mountain-top restaurant, expansion of the Slide-In Lodge and renovation of the Thunderbird Lodge at Summit West, new Summit Central Base Lodge, and construction of the new Silver Fir Base Lodge will provide approximately 2,848 additional food service seats at The Summit. We are sure these improvements to guest service facilities will result in reduced crowding in the base areas and on the ski trails leading to base area facilities (see ROD Table 1).

Finally, we feel that the Selected Alternative addresses the need to balance the capacities of skier service facilities and lift and trail capacities by increasing guest service capacity commensurate with the improvements to the lift and trail network.

Vehicular Circulation, Parking, and Shuttle Services

We have given a great deal of consideration to increasing available parking at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie. Many of the comments received during the public participation process focused on the limited parking available at The Summit and Alpentel, the effect this has on the guest experience at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie, and the reliance on the shuttle system to travel between base areas during peak

use days. The FEIS discusses how on peak use days the parking requirement at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie is lower than the existing capacity (see FEIS Section 3.11.3 – Developed Winter Recreation page 2-232). This is most notable at Alpental where visitors are sometimes forced to park in other areas at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie and rely on the shuttle service. In response to these comments we have decided to authorize construction of 9.8 acres of additional parking as discussed in Alternatives 2, 3 and Modified Alternative 5 (see FEIS Section 2.3.3.4 – Parking page 2-42, and FEIS Table 2.3.3-5 page 2-42), to better meet the need. Also, the Selected Alternative authorizes the paving of Alpental Road and several existing lots throughout The Summit-at-Snoqualmie, and it allows the use of a de-icer/ice-inhibitor as an alternative to sand (see FEIS Section 4.3.3.1 – Upper Yakima Watershed page 4-95). We believe this will maximize available parking at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie through improved snow and stormwater management and will decrease the amount of sediment in Riparian Reserves at Alpental.

The selection of Alternative 4 would have provided an opportunity for Riparian Reserve restoration along the South Fork Snoqualmie River through the relocation of Alpental Road and abandonment and revegetation of Parking Lot 7 (see FEIS Section 2.3.5.4 - Parking page 2-58). However, we believe this would exacerbate the effect of insufficient parking at Alpental by reducing the available parking by 12 percent over the existing condition and representing the greatest impact to skiers wishing to park at Alpental (see FEIS Section 4.11.4 – Impacts – Alternative 4 page 4-620 – 621, and FEIS Section 4.12.4 – Impacts – Alternative 4 page 4-637).

There is a need to provide a convenient and quality recreation experience for all site visitors on a year-round basis.

Alpine Terrain

We believe the Selected Alternative corrects deficiencies in The Summit-at-Snoqualmie lift and trail network that result in the reduced quality of the recreation experience. The existing terrain at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie contains poorly defined trail boundaries and routes to chairlifts and facilities due to the lack of trees and surrounding vegetation. Separation between beginner areas and more advanced terrain is also poor as skiers are required to traverse across active ski trails to reach their destinations at Summit Central and Summit West. At these intersections, skiers of all ability levels may be found in unacceptably high densities, particularly during the mid-day lunch time and afternoon closing time. This situation results in skier conflicts and potential safety concerns along these trails (see FEIS Section 3.11.3 – Developed Winter Recreation page 3-229, and FEIS Section 4.11.1 - Impacts – Alternative 1 [No Action Alternative] page 4-600 - 601).

We have determined that improvements to circulation and dispersal of skiers are achieved by the Selected Alternative because this alternative establishes tree islands or reforests many of the slopes that have over time been cleared of trees (e.g., Summit West). Through the establishment of these tree islands on previously cleared trails (see ROD Figure 2) we believe skier circulation will be improved through more

defined trail boundaries and separation between the beginner areas and more advanced terrain (see FEIS Section 4.11.3 – Impacts – Alternative 3 page 4-614).

Throughout The Summit ski areas, intermediate and advanced intermediate terrain is lacking, mainly as a result of the steepness of the upper trail system (expert terrain) and the lower slope gradients along the lower terrain (beginner to low intermediate terrain). We are convinced there is a need to provide more intermediate to advanced intermediate terrain. The Selected Alternative introduces new lift-served terrain in the *Rampart* pod to increase the amount of intermediate and advanced intermediate terrain. The addition of the *Rampart* pod will provide the most consistent fall-line intermediate and advanced-intermediate terrain throughout The Summit-at-Snoqualmie (see FEIS Section 4.11.2 - Impacts – Alternative 2 [Proposed Action] page 4-607).

The Selected Alternative also greatly enhances the beginner experience by realigning the lifts serving beginner terrain to provide more appropriate slope gradients, fall-lines and access to beginner terrain (e.g., *Little Thunder, Holiday*). By relocating terminals closer to base area facilities walking distances will be minimized, creating more desirable learning conditions. Based on the analysis in the FEIS, we are convinced these improvements will have a positive effect on the first-time visitor and beginner experience at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie (see FEIS Section 4.11.3 – Impacts – Alternative 3 page 4-614).

Finally, we feel the Selected Alternative substantially increases the convenience of skiers who wish to access the Internationale bowl at Alpentel. To ski the Internationale bowl, skiers are currently required to ride the *Armstrong Express* and *Edelweiss* chairlifts. Our Decision to approve construction of the *Internationale* chairlift was based on many public comments regarding the long lift lines that form on peak visitation days on the *Armstrong Express* and *Edelweiss* chairlifts (see FEIS Volume 5 – Response to Comments page RTC -134 - 140). We believe the construction of the *Internationale* chairlift will provide an improved recreation experience for skiers wishing to round-trip ski this portion of the existing SUP area, thereby eliminating user conflicts as skiers are currently required to cross through lower level terrain to access the bottom terminal of the *Armstrong Express* (see FEIS Section 4.11.2 – Impacts – Alternative 2 [Proposed Action] page 4-608).

Scenic Gondola Rides

In considering the issues related to the need to provide a year-round recreational experience, we evaluated the comments received during the public scoping period and the responses received following release of the DEIS. The issues varied from the potential increased use of the adjacent Alpine Lakes Wilderness, to the limited space available on the top of Denny Mountain. Although Modified Alternative 5 would have satisfied the need to provide this experience by providing a Pulse Gondola and mountain-top restaurant (see Section 4.11.2 – Impacts – Alternative 2 [Proposed Action] page 4-608 - 609) Ski Lifts, Inc. has withdrawn the gondola and restaurant from the proposal to address these concerns. As a result, the Selected Alternative does not include the Pulse Gondola or mountain-top restaurant at Alpentel.

While no summer program is included in the Selected Alternative, we believe that the improvements to the ski facilities will increase convenience and quality for users of all types by providing more accessible base facilities, better separation of skier ability levels, and increased guest service facilities (see FEIS Section 4.11.3 – Impacts – Alternative 3 page 4-615).

There is a need to implement restoration projects to help improve the watershed condition

The watershed within the existing SUP area has been altered by previous management activities (e.g., ski area development, utility clearing, and road construction). The Selected Alternative includes the management and monitoring plans that are intended to maintain or improve the health of the aquatic and riparian ecosystems within the Upper South Fork Snoqualmie and Coal Creek Watersheds (see FEIS Section 1.1.2.3 – Purpose and Need page 1-25) in order to be consistent with Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines. These plans include those restoration projects originally proposed by the proponent and the additional projects included as part of Alternatives 3, 4 and Modified Alternative 5 (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan, Tables 5-1 and 5-2, pages 44-46 and 46-47). It is our Decision that all restoration projects will be carried out and phased with construction projects as described in FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan. We believe that the process of implementing restoration projects in conjunction with construction activities will help minimize environmental impacts and meet pertinent standards and guidelines such as those from the Northwest Forest Plan (see FEIS Table 4.7-FEIS-1 page 4-430, and FEIS Table 4.7-FEIS-2 page 4-482) and the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area Plan (SPAMA) (see FEIS Table 4.6.2-1 page 4-413).

There is a need to amend the WNF Forest Plan to correct the SUP boundaries and allocations within the existing SUP boundary for more efficient administration

The Selected Alternative authorizes an amendment to the *WNF Forest Plan* to adjust the SUP boundaries and allocations within the existing SUP boundary for more efficient administration. There are several reasons we believe this amendment is necessary. Prior to the acquisition of Summit East (formerly Hyak) and Summit Central (formerly Ski Acres) by Ski Lifts, Inc. the two areas operated under separate SUPs that were separated by Hyak Creek, which was not included in either permit area. With the purchase of Summit East and Summit Central by Ski Lifts, Inc., the ski areas operations are no longer separate (see FEIS Figures 1.1.1-FEIS-3 and 1.1.1-FEIS-2). We believe an amendment to the *WNF Forest Plan* to incorporate the entire area along Hyak Creek between Summit East and Summit Central will allow for more efficient administration of the SUP and allow for the construction of *Trail 71*, the new *Summit East-Summit Central Crossover* (see ROD Figure 2).

The Selected Alternative also re-allocates 380.01 acres of OWNF lands within the existing SUP area to Management Prescription SPAMA-RE-1 – Developed Recreation. The existing *Silver Fir* chairlift and trails, *Summit Central-Summit East Crossover* and *Summit East-Summit Central Crossover* trails, cross-country hut at Grand Junction (approximately 500 feet west of Hyak Lake, occupying roughly 0.01 acres),

and roads are located on this portion of the SUP area. These lands are currently allocated to AMA (ST-1), which is not consistent with their current inclusion in the ski area SUP boundary and the presence/operation of ski area facilities within them.

By amending the Forest Plan, we believe the re-designation of this area to Management Prescription SPAMA-RE-1 – Developed Recreation will be the most consistent with its use and its presence within the SUP area. The Plan Amendment will place the land in the appropriate management prescription for ski areas and will not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management (FSM 1926.51-1). Both ST-1 and RE-1 are managed under the retention visual quality objective. Therefore this reallocation has no visual quality effects (see Section 4.15 – Visual Resources).

2.3.2 How Environmental Issues and Other Resources Were Considered

In making our Decision, we carefully considered the issues brought forward through public scoping (see FEIS Section 1.5.1 – Scoping Process and Public Participation page 1-47 – 48, and Table 1.5.2-1 page 1-48) and DEIS comment process (see FEIS Volume 5 - Response to Comments page RTC-1 - 2) for this project. The following section presents the significant issues identified in the FEIS and explains the rationale for our Decision in terms of these issues. Those issues that were given particular weight in our Decision are identified below as “Decision Factors” (see FEIS Section 1.5.2 – Significant Issues page 1-51 - 56).

Stream Channels and Floodplains

Issue: *Potential exists for projects to impact stream channel and floodplain characteristics.*

Within the existing ski area, many of the streams channels have been influenced by natural processes (e.g., fire, debris flows, and other mass wasting events) and altered by management activities (e.g., ski area development, timber harvest, and highway construction). Based on the analysis in the FEIS, we realize that all the alternatives have the potential to affect stream channel and floodplain characteristics. However, we are convinced that the majority of projects that had the potential to effect stream channels and floodplains were removed from the alternatives during the early planning and development of alternatives phase (see FEIS Appendix A – Alternatives Considered and Modifications to the Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP, Section 1.1 - Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Study page A-1 - 9). These projects included an expansion of the parking lot adjacent to the Summit West fire station which would have required the removal of old-growth aged trees as well as the complete culverting of a stream, and the expansion of Parking Lot 6 at Alpentel which would have resulted in unacceptable impacts to Riparian Reserves.

In arriving at our Decision, we recognized many projects intended to improve the watershed condition were components of all the Action Alternatives. For example, the restoration projects included in FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan Table 5.1 (FEIS page F-45 –

47) were common to all of the Action Alternatives. This included the daylighting of Beaver Lake Creek, which has been substantially modified by previous ski area development. We believe this to be the most beneficial restoration project with regard to stream channel characteristics (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan, Table 5-1 page F-45 - 47) as it decreases modified channel length in the Beaver Lake Creek drainage (see FEIS Table 4.3.6-1 page 4-174). Also common to all Action Alternatives is the paving of Alpentel Road and several existing lots throughout The Summit-at-Snoqualmie (see FEIS Section 4.3.4.2 - South Fork Snoqualmie River Watershed page 4-114), implementation of a Stormwater Management Plan (see FEIS Appendix G) and use of a de-icer/ice-inhibitor as an alternative to sand. We are convinced this will reduce sediment flow into stream channels from adjacent developed areas. Because all the Action Alternatives require implementation of Management Requirements MR2, MR8, MR9, MR10, and Other Management Provision OMP9 (see ROD Appendix A), which require erosion control measures during construction, we believe the potential for sediment reaching streams will be further reduced.

As the analysis in the FEIS identifies, key parameters that impact stream channels are reduced from existing conditions in all of the Action Alternatives. Examples of this include reductions in road density and the number of culverted stream crossings under all the Action Alternatives (see FEIS Table 2.7-2 page 2-95).

Based on our review of the FEIS, there are few differences in potential effects associated with all the Action Alternatives. We find that following withdrawal of the *Creek Run* lift and associated trails from the proposal prior to the release of the FEIS, a key potential impact to Riparian Reserves is avoided, similar to Alternative 3 (see FEIS Table 4.5.2-1C page 4-295). Therefore, we believe that the Selected Alternative adequately balances the concern for potential impacts to stream channel and floodplain characteristics with the recreational goals of the ski area by authorizing the implementation of various restoration projects (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan Table 5-1 page F-45 - 47, and Table 5-2 page F-47 - 49) designed to improve the watershed condition.

Riparian Reserves

Issue: The proposed project has the potential to affect the extent and function of Riparian Reserves that are located within the ski area.

As described in this ROD, the Selected Alternative addresses potential impacts to Riparian Reserves by incorporating components of Alternative 3. Specifically, with the elimination of the *Creek Run* chairlift and associated trails, key impacts to mature forest within Riparian Reserves have been avoided, similar to Alternative 3 (see FEIS Table 4.3.3-6C page 4-107). We recognize that the Selected Alternative includes the *Rampart* chairlift and trails which will result in impacts to Riparian Reserves (as described in Alternative 3). However, we find that the benefits of the 390-acre Mill Creek land donation sufficiently outweigh the impacts to Riparian Reserves which are necessary to expand the *Rampart* pod. Through the

incorporation of the 390-acre Mill Creek parcel into NFS lands, we find that Riparian Reserves allocation will increase as compared to the existing condition (see FEIS Table 4.3.3-6C page 4-107).

We believe the Selected Alternative includes restoration projects that will result in several beneficial impacts to Riparian Reserve function. For example, our Decision authorizes the removal of an extended culvert to daylight Beaver Lake Creek (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan Table 5.1 page F-45 - 47) and stream channel restoration near the tubing area. Through the implementation of these restoration projects, we are convinced that Riparian Reserve conditions will continue to improve throughout the South Fork Snoqualmie and Upper Yakima River watersheds.

Under the Selected Alternative, Ski Lifts, Inc. will implement a Stormwater Management Plan, which will authorize the use of oil/water separators and sediment detention areas (see FEIS Appendix G – Conceptual Stormwater Management Plan). We believe this will reduce the amount of sediment delivered to Riparian Reserves, streams, and wetlands near parking lots. Additionally, our Decision authorizes the paving of parking facilities throughout the ski area, Alpental Road and the use of a de-icer/ice inhibitor. We are convinced that these actions will minimize the amount of sediment reaching Riparian Reserves from adjacent developed areas. Through the implementation of the MDP Implementation Plan (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan) and other specific mitigation measures, management requirements, and other management provisions from Table 2.4-2 (FEIS page 2-68 – 76), we are convinced that any short-term construction sediment yield to Riparian Reserves will be minimal.

Vegetation

***Issue:** The distribution and composition of vegetation communities would be altered as a result of the proposed ski area projects. The proposed projects may affect unique vegetation communities, such as wetlands, or special-status plants. Special-status plants include Proposed, Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive vascular and non-vascular plant species.*

In our review of concerns that the ski area projects would affect the composition of vegetation communities and unique vegetation communities, we believe the Selected Alternative best resolves this issue. Our Decision does not include the *Creek Run* chairlift and associated trails described in Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 5 (see FEIS Section 2.3.3.2 - Trails page 2-32, and FEIS Section 2.3.6.2 - Trails page 2-62), as it has been withdrawn by the proponent prior to release of the FEIS. Through the elimination of the *Creek Run* lift and trails from the Selected Alternative the greatest impact to mature forest is avoided, similar to Alternative 3 (see FEIS Table 4.5.2-1C page 4-295). We recognize that the Selected Alternative includes the *Rampart* lift and trails and will require tree removal in late-successional habitat (LSH), and long-term impacts to 21.34 acres of mature forest (see FEIS Table 4.5.3-FEIS-1 page 4-306). However, we are convinced that the Selected Alternative provides a balance between the

recreation needs of the ski area expansion while providing effective stewardship by taking advantage of existing openings in the forest (i.e., *Trails 55, 60, 61, 63, 66, and 67*) (see FEIS Figure 2.3.2-1 and ROD Figure 2).

Based on our review of the Biological Evaluation, which concluded that there will be no effect to special status plants (e.g., *Schistostega pennata, Hypogymnia duplicata*), we do not believe that any special status plant communities are likely to be affected by the Selected Alternative. The *Creek Run* lift and associated trails presented the greatest impact to special status plant populations (see FEIS Section 4.5.3.1 - Upper Yakima River Watershed page 4-308). As it has been withdrawn from consideration, there is little risk to special status populations. Our Decision includes mitigation measure MM1 (see ROD Appendix A), which maintains overstory canopy densities of 70 percent where it currently exists and will contribute to the protection of special status plant populations in Section 16. Additional management requirements (e.g., MR22, MR25, MR26, MR27) will be put in place in order to minimize impacts to special status plant populations as they are encountered during the implementation process.

The Selected Alternative also includes the donation of the 390-acre Mill Creek parcel (as described in Alternatives 3 and Modified Alternative 5) to offset impacts to forested habitat within Section 16. As described in Alternative 3 and Modified Alternative 5, the Mill Creek parcel will become part of the SPAMA and will be managed for LSH and connectivity. As a result, we believe the Selected Alternative has the highest potential to increase the amount and distribution of forested communities within the SPAMA. Although the condition of the donated land is early-seral, the FEIS shows that management of this land as LSH will contribute to an improving trend in LSH in the Snoqualmie Pass area over the long-term (see FEIS Illustration 4.6.4-FEIS-1 page 4-381 and FEIS Section 4.6.4.2 – Habitat Connectivity pages 4-380 – 4-381). FEIS Table 4.6.2-1 (see FEIS pages 4-413 – 4-428) compares AMA standards and guidelines to the alternatives and makes determination (neutral/beneficial), and describes that long-term benefits of the land donation will mitigate the impacts of the Selected Alternative. Additionally, the Selected Alternative includes tree island restoration to increase the amount and distribution of forested communities present at the ski area (see FEIS Section 4.5.1 – Impact Mechanisms page 4-290, Table ROD - 2 and ROD Figure 2).

Wetlands

Issue: The proposal would result in impacts to the number, size, and function of wetlands and their associated species within and adjacent to the project area.

We believe the Selected Alternative is the most appropriate option with respect to impacts to wetlands. During the early planning and alternative development phase, several projects that had the potential to impact wetlands were eliminated from further study (see FEIS Appendix A – Alternatives Considered and Alternatives to the Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP pages A-1 - 9). The original MDP proposal included a regrade of the terrain served by the *St. Bernard* chairlift (see FEIS Appendix A – Alternatives Considered

and Alternatives to the Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP, Section 1.2.4 – St. Bernard Regrade page A-11) and the development of a sports park at Summit Central (see FEIS Appendix A – Alternatives Considered and Alternatives to the Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP, Section 1.2.9 – Summit Central Private Lands page A-13). These projects would have resulted in unnecessary impacts to wetland and Riparian Reserve function. We believe through revisions like these that impacts to wetlands have been avoided to the greatest extent possible.

The Selected Alternative (similar to Alternative 3) includes less clearing and grading in wetlands than Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 5 (see FEIS Table 4.3.3-3 page 2-37 – 38). We are convinced that through the elimination of the *Creek Run* lift and associated trails, the concerns related to impacts to wetlands are largely addressed. Implementation of the Selected Alternative will result in wetland impacts; however, we have attempted to further avoid or reduce, through detailed project design, direct and indirect effects to wetlands and wetland function. As illustrated by FEIS Figure 4.3.1-1, the placement of the *Rampart* chairlift bottom terminal is sited to avoid adjacent wetlands.

We feel that the implementation process outlined in this ROD will further reduce wetland impacts as detailed construction plans are designed and approved. For example, projects including Parking Lot 2 and Parking Lot 4 at Silver Fir will be further designed prior to implementation to minimize grading impacts and field fit¹² during the construction phase to limit impact to adjacent wetlands (see FEIS Figure 2.3.4-1).

The Selected Alternative includes restoration projects outlined in FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan, Section 5 – Restoration (FEIS page F-45). We are convinced that these restoration projects in conjunction with the mitigation measures, management requirements and other management provisions listed in ROD Appendix A will contribute to the overall improvement of wetland function.

Wildlife Habitat Connectivity

Issue: *The Proposed Action could impact wildlife habitat connectivity.*

In considering the impacts to wildlife habitat connectivity, we evaluated the effects on wildlife habitat quantity and quality (see below). We considered that the *Creek Run* chairlift and associated trails described in Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 5 (see FEIS Section 2.3.3.2 - Trails page 2-32 – 33, and FEIS Section 2.3.6.2 - Trails page 2-62) had been withdrawn by the proponent prior to release of the FEIS. Through the elimination of the *Creek Run* lift and trails from the Selected Alternative, the greatest impact to mature forest is avoided similar to Alternative 3 (see FEIS Table 4.5.2-1C page 4-295), preserving a potential wildlife corridor through Section 16.

¹² During implementation, efforts will be taken to ensure that on-the-ground construction takes place within the approved limits of disturbance. Where possible, individual project elements may be further refined to reduce disturbance and resulting environmental impacts below the threshold identified in the EIS.

We believe that the Selected Alternative allows for improvements to the lift and trail network necessary to more efficiently incorporate Summit East into the overall resort, while the elimination of the *Creek Run* chairlift and associated trails addresses public concerns over wildlife habitat connectivity in Section 16. We believe the elimination of the *Creek Run* pod from the Selected Alternative will maintain the existing wildlife corridor associated with Hyak Creek. We believe the 390-acre Mill Creek land donation included in the Selected Alternative will increase habitat connectivity throughout the Snoqualmie Pass area, particularly within the Connectivity Emphasis Area of the SPAMA.

Our Decision authorizes night lighting of the trails associated with the *Rampart* and *Silver Fir* chairlifts. The majority of the existing trails at Summit East currently provide night lighting. The new lighting necessary to expand the Rampart pod will be in addition to this existing night lighting, rather than an entirely new area of night skiing. Based on the analysis in the FEIS, we believe the impacts to nocturnal species and species occupying habitat adjacent to these trails will be minimized through implementation of OMP42 (see ROD Appendix A, and FEIS Section 4.6.4.2 – Habitat Connectivity page 4-381), requiring directional lighting to minimize night glare.

Wildlife Habitat Quantity and Quality

Issue: The Proposed Action could impact wildlife habitat quantity and quality through loss or conversion of habitat types or through an increase in the potential for disturbance from human activity.

Development within Section 16 at Summit East has been the most contentious issue raised by the public in this NEPA process. When considering the effect of allowing additional development within Section 16 we evaluated the Action Alternatives for consistency with AMA/LSR Standards and Guidelines (see FEIS Section 1.2.4 - Particularly Applicable Goals, Standards and Guidelines page 1-39 - 41). These standards and guidelines permit new facilities and the expansion of facilities if they are neutral or beneficial to existing late-successional forest conditions.

Based on our review of the FEIS, we are convinced that our Decision to authorize the Selected Alternative is consistent with the AMA/LSR Standards and Guidelines and has the potential to increase LSH (see ROD Section 6.0 – Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations and FEIS Table 4.6.3-1B page 4-346). In arriving at our Decision, we considered that the *Creek Run* chairlift and associated trails described in Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 5 (see FEIS Section 2.3.3.2 - Trails page 2-32 – 33, and FEIS Section 2.3.6.2 - Trails page 2-62) had been withdrawn by the proponent prior to release of the FEIS. Through the elimination of the *Creek Run* lift and trails from the Selected Alternative, the greatest impact to mature forest is avoided, similar to Alternative 3 (see FEIS Table 4.5.2-1C page 4-295), preserving a potential wildlife corridor through Section 16. The Selected Alternative also includes the donation of the 390-acre Mill Creek parcel (as described in Alternatives 3 and Modified Alternative 5) to offset impacts to forested habitat within Section 16. Because the Selected Alternative includes the Mill

Creek parcel and the 390-acre land donation (as in Alternative 3), we believe the Selected Alternative has the highest potential to provide LSH for species that utilize the Gold Creek corridor (see FEIS Section 4.6.4.2 – Habitat Connectivity page 4-380 – 381, and FEIS Volume 5 – Response to Comments page RTC-84), while meeting the Purpose and Need. This donated land will become part of the SPAMA and will be managed for LSH and connectivity. FEIS Table 4.6.2-1 (see FEIS page 4-413) provides a summary of AMA/LSR Standards and Guidelines that are relevant to wildlife and vegetation and compares them to components of the alternatives. This table also presents a determination for each alternative as to whether the alternative is neutral, detrimental or beneficial to LSH with respect to each standard. Of the Action Alternatives only Alternative 2 was found to be detrimental to LSH. Our Decision does not include any of the components of Alternative 2 that would result in the Selected Alternative being detrimental to LSH. Based on the analysis in the FEIS, we are convinced that the impacts to forested habitat within Section 16, combined with the Mill Creek land donation, results in a neutral or beneficial impact to late-successional forest (see FEIS Section 4.6.9 - Adaptive Management Area Standards and Guidelines page 4-412). Although the development of LSH is a long-term process, we believe the trend is towards an overall improvement in wildlife habitat quality and quantity in the Snoqualmie Pass area (see FEIS Illustration 4.6.4-FEIS-1 page 4-381).

Recreation

Issue: The development of additional Nordic and alpine return trails may negatively affect the existing dispersed recreation use of Nordic Pass. The Proposed Action may also affect the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and other dispersed recreation uses such as rock climbing. The Proposed Action would provide increased recreation opportunities for users of the ski area on a year-round basis, within the existing permit boundary.

Our Decision addresses the concerns related to this issue to a great degree. The mountain-top restaurant and *Pulse Gondola* at Alpental have been withdrawn as proposed activities by Ski Lifts, Inc. following release of the DEIS. Therefore, we have not included these facilities in the Selected Alternative. During the summer months, the summit of Denny Mountain provides dispersed recreation opportunities for hikers and rock climbers. The Selected Alternative will therefore continue to provide this experience of solitude during the summer months. Further, the Selected Alternative does not add new terrain to the SUP area at Alpental.

As described in this ROD, the Selected Alternative addresses impacts to Nordic Pass users by incorporating components of Alternative 3. Specifically, the Selected Alternative would not authorize construction of a new *Summit Central-Summit East Crossover* as described in Alternative 2 (see FEIS Figure 2.3.3-1) or Modified Alternative 5 (see Figure 2.3.6-1), rather the existing *Trail 49* will be modified with a small skier trestle (see ROD Appendix A, MM4) in order to minimize impacts to users of the Nordic Pass route. Further, by not authorizing the *Creek Run* chairlift and associated trails at Summit East that were included in Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 5, we believe impacts to Nordic Pass

users will be minimized, because no additional alpine skiing would take place in the Creek Run area, compared to the existing condition.

Improvements to the Nordic facilities have not been included in the MDP proposal to the USFS (see FEIS Section 1.1.2.2 - The Proposed Action page 1-11). As a result, the DEIS and FEIS do not analyze improvements to the Nordic facilities. This Decision does not address improvements to the Nordic facilities at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie.

All of the Action Alternatives have the potential to impact dispersed recreation within the vicinity of Nordic Pass through increased visitation due to improvements to the ski area (see FEIS Illustration 4.11.1 page 4-603). However, we believe the Selected Alternative provides the best balance of managing user conflicts while satisfying the need to provide a full spectrum of recreational facilities to serve all recreational users. This is consistent with the MBSNF and WNF Forest Plans and the public land allocations at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie ski area (including Summit East) of Management Prescription SPAMA-RE-1 - Developed Recreation and Administratively Withdrawn-MA27D - Developed Site (see FEIS Section 1.2.3 – Management Direction for National Forest System Lands page 1-30 – 35, and FEIS Section 1.2.4 – Particularly Applicable Goals, Standards and Guidelines page 1-35 - 41).

Social and Economic Factors

Issue: Implementation of the Proposed Action may have social and economic effects on areas and communities within and adjacent to NFS lands.

The Summit-at-Snoqualmie Ski Area affects visitor spending both at the ski area (e.g., lift tickets, food and beverage, rentals) and in nearby communities (e.g., food and beverage, gas, ski equipment and apparel, rentals). The ski area provides full and part-time, seasonal and non-seasonal employment to local residents. The Selected Alternative will produce an increased measure of social and economic impacts, through increased employment (see ROD Table 2), increased visitation and increased visitor spending throughout the impact area. Specifically, the Selected Alternative will provide over 330 full-time equivalent construction related jobs (see FEIS Table 4.10.2-3 page 4-579), and as a result of additional lifts, new and expanded services, additional grooming, and expanded ski school and ski patrol operations over 440 direct, long-term employment will be generated at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie (see FEIS Table 4.10.2-4 page 4-580). However, even with the increased employment due to ski area development, we do not believe that The Summit-at-Snoqualmie is a major employer on a regional level in King or Kittitas County (see FEIS Section 4.10.2.3 - Employment page 4-580). For this reason, we do not believe the Selected Alternative will have any measurable social or economic effect on the adjacent communities.

2.3.3 Aquatic Conservation Strategy Finding and Rationale

We have reviewed the relevant analysis in the FEIS that pertains to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives described in the Northwest Forest Plan ROD (USDA and USDI 1994) (see FEIS Section 4.7 –

Aquatic Conservation Strategy page 4-429) and we have determined that this Decision meets these objectives. In developing our rationale for this determination, we followed the direction provided on page B-10 of the Northwest Forest Plan ROD (USDA and USDI 1994). Our rationale is provided below.

We reviewed the specialists' analysis of the existing condition, as provided in the Upper Yakima River Watershed Analysis (USFS 1997), South Fork Snoqualmie River Watershed Analysis (USFS 1995), the Upper South Fork Snoqualmie River and Coal Creek Watershed Condition Assessment (Jones and Stokes 2001), and other pertinent analyses prepared for the FEIS, such as:

- Appendix B – Wetland Technical Report
- Appendix C – Botanical Technical Report
- Appendix D – Wildlife Resources Report
- Appendix E – Aquatic Endangered Species Act (ESA) Listed Species Baseline Conditions Report
- Appendix G – Conceptual Stormwater Management Plan
- Appendix I – Physical and Biological Resource Data Tables
- Appendix K – Biological Assessment

Based on our evaluation of the range of natural variability of important physical and biological resources described in the watershed analyses (USFS 1995, 1997) and summarized in FEIS Tables 4.7-FEIS 1 and 4.7-FEIS 2 (see FEIS pages 4-430 and 4-482), we are confident with our finding that this Decision “meets” the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.

In making this finding, we paid particular attention to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives and Standards and Guidelines that pertain to riparian function. The analysis of Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives at the site and 5th field scales is provided in FEIS Tables 4.7-FEIS 1 and 4.7-FEIS 2 (see FEIS pages 4-430 and 4-482). Riparian Reserves Standards and Guidelines are evaluated in FEIS Tables 4.3.7-1 and 4.3.7-2 (see FEIS pages 4-196 and 4-204).

We recognize that this Decision will have site scale impacts, including:

- The removal of 21.6 acres of mature and immature forest in Riparian Reserves for the construction of ski trails and other facilities (see FEIS Tables 4.3.3-6A and 4.3.3-12 pages 4-105 and 4-126).

- Clearing and grading of 5.13 acres for roads, buildings, and parking lots that would result in a developed condition within Riparian Reserves (see FEIS Tables 4.3.3-6A and 4.3.3-12 pages 4-105 and 4-126).
- Alterations to the **sediment regime** at the site scale. The estimated long-term increase in soil detachment under the Selected Alternative would result in an increase of approximately 5.4 tons per year in the portion of the Study Area located in the Upper Yakima River watershed (see FEIS Table 4.2.3-2 page 4-34). The sediment regime in the South Fork Snoqualmie River watershed would be improved as road and parking lot paving would reduce sediment yield from the existing condition by approximately 18.16 tons per year (see FEIS Table 4.2.3-2 page 4-34) without the application of BMPs. With the application of BMPs, the delivery of sediment to streams would be reduced (see FEIS Section 4.3.4.1 – Upper Yakima River Watershed page 4-133, and Section 4.3.4.2 – South Fork Snoqualmie River Watershed page 4-149).
- Alterations to the **flow regimes** at the site scale. The estimated increase in two-year peak flow under the Selected Alternative would be 0.4 percent in the portion of the Study Area located in the Upper Yakima River watershed and 0.3 percent in the portion of the Study Area located in the South Fork Snoqualmie River watershed (see FEIS Table 4.3.3-5 page 4-98 – 99, and FEIS Table 4.3.3-11 page 4-121). The relatively small projected increase in two-year peak flow combined with the typical amount of instrumentation error associated with measuring discharge rates indicates that the estimated increase in stream flow would be mitigated by the implementation of BMPs, mitigation measures, management requirements, and other management practices (see FEIS Section 4.3.4 – Impacts – Alternative 3 pages 4-137, and ROD Appendix A).

As described in Section 4.7 – Aquatic Conservation Strategy (see FEIS page 4-484 and 4-434) and FEIS Section 4.3 – Watershed Resources page 4-219 and 4-226), the site-scale effects, when combined with the effects of cumulative actions in the 5th field watersheds, will occupy only 5.06 percent of the Riparian Reserves in the Upper Yakima River watershed and 2.69 percent of the Riparian Reserves in the South Fork Snoqualmie River watershed (see FEIS Table 4.3.8-2 page 4-219, and Table 4.3.8-4 page 4-226). In addition, these effects to Riparian Reserves are widely distributed throughout the entire 5th field watersheds (see FEIS Tables 4.7-FEIS-1 page 4-434, and FEIS Table 4.7-FEIS-2 page 4-484). As a result, the site-scale effects resulting from implementation of our Decision are limited in geographic scope and environmental effect.

In addition to the spatial scope and distribution of effects in the analysis, we considered mitigation measures, management requirements and other management provisions (see ROD Appendix A) in our finding regarding the Aquatic Conservation Strategy. FEIS Tables 4.3.7-1 and 4.3.7-2 describe construction techniques and other mitigations that are included in our Decision and that are intended to

assist in meeting the Standards and Guidelines for Riparian Reserves and the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives. These include, but are not limited to:

- The donation of 390 acres of land in the Mill Creek watershed.
- Ski trail, lift line and facility construction over the snow when possible (see FEIS Table 2.4-1 page 2-65 – 67, and ROD Appendix A, MR4, OMP35, OMP36).
- Lop and scatter of non-merchantable trees to maintain woody debris and minimize ground disturbance associated with tree removal (see FEIS Table 2.4-1 page 2-65-67).
- Implementation of watershed restoration projects (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan).
- Implementation of a stormwater management plan to capture flows and sediment from the new parking lot (see FEIS Appendix G – Conceptual Stormwater Management Plan).

In summary, the comparatively small, localized effects of the Selected Alternative, taken in space and time with the trends in the 5th field watersheds, support our findings that this Decision “meets” the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.

3.0 OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

3.1 Alternatives Considered

The NEPA requires that the USFS develop, describe, and study reasonable alternatives to proposed actions for use of NFS lands. We considered a range of reasonable alternatives in arriving at our Decision, including an alternative that would not authorize The Summit-at-Snoqualmie to expand their ski area (the No Action Alternative). Following is a brief description of the alternatives that we considered in detail. FEIS Table 2.7-1 (see FEIS page 2-81) provides a summary comparison of the ski area facilities for Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, and Modified Alternative 5 while Table 2.7-2 (see FEIS page 2-95) provides a comparison of the environmental consequences.

3.1.1 Alternative 1: No Action

Description: As required by NEPA, a No Action Alternative is included in this FEIS as a benchmark against which the Action Alternatives can be compared (see FEIS Figures 2.3.2-1 and 2.3.2-2). The No Action Alternative also serves as a means of analyzing the effects of “no future development” within the Project Area. Under Alternative 1, there would be no additional development of new facilities.

Under the No Action Alternative, The Summit would continue to operate 20 lifts (16 chairlifts and 4 surface lifts) on approximately 545 acres, accommodating a CCC of 8,140 skiers and Alpentel would

continue to operate 5 lifts (4 chairlifts and 1 surface lift) on approximately 206 acres accommodating a CCC of 1,880 skiers. Any future lift replacements would utilize an alignment and configuration similar to the original lift, and require project-specific approval from the USFS (including appropriate scoping, public involvement, analysis and documentation) or appropriate regulatory agency(s). FEIS Table 2.3.2-1 (see FEIS page 2-8) summarizes the specifications of the chairlift network at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie under Alternative 1.

Decision: We did not select the No Action Alternative primarily because it would not meet the Purpose and Need (see ROD Section 2.3.1 – Purpose and Need). If the No Action Alternative were selected, The Summit-at-Snoqualmie would continue to not meet industry standards for terrain distribution, and the trail system would continue to suffer from bottlenecks, congestion, and poor skier circulation at many trail intersections and base area facilities. Inadequate parking would continue to be a problem (see FEIS Section 4.11.1 – Impacts – Alternative 1 [No Action Alternative] page 4-605 and FEIS Section 4.12.1 – Impacts – Alternative 1 [No Action Alternative] page 4-631). Because of this, the quality of the recreation opportunities available at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie under Alternative 1 would not meet the expectations of visitors in numerous critical areas, including the needs identified in ROD Section 2.3.1 - Purpose and Need.

3.1.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Description: Under Alternative 2 (Proposed Action), The Summit’s CCC would increase from 8,140 (as in the No Action Alternative) to 10,710 and Alpentel’s CCC would increase from 1,880 to 2,920 (see FEIS Section 2.3.3 – Alternative 2 - Proposed Action page 2-22). This is an increase of approximately 36 percent, or 3,610 skiers for the entire resort. The increased capacity would be achieved through the replacement of existing lifts, installation of new lifts, development of new ski terrain and construction of additional support facilities. Under Alternative 2, a year-round gondola and mountain-top restaurant at Alpentel would be constructed, which would allow skier and foot-passenger access to the summit of Denny Mountain throughout the entire year. Alternative 2 includes the development of the *Rampart* and *Creek Run* lift and trails at Summit East within Section 16.

Alternative 2 would include a non-significant (under NFMA) Forest Plan amendment, which would add a total of approximately 53 acres to the SUP area, including Hyak Creek, the egress area at the top of the *Silver Fir* chairlift (in Sections 16 and 17), and the cross-country hut at Grand Junction (approximately 500 feet west of Hyak Lake, occupying roughly 0.01 acre).¹³ The expansion would incorporate Hyak Creek into the SUP area and provide for construction and use of the proposed crossover trails between Summit East and Summit Central. The Forest Plan amendment would also reallocate a total of 433.01

¹³ Prior to the acquisition of the ski area by Ski Lifts, Inc., Ski Acres and Hyak ski areas operated under separate SUPs that provided separate operations. The SUP areas were separated by Hyak Creek, which was not included in either permit area. With the purchase of Hyak and Ski Acres by Ski Lifts, Inc., the ski area operations were no longer separate. This expansion would “clean up” the SUP area along Hyak Creek.

acres of OWNF lands from AMA (ST-1 - Scenic Travel) to AMA (SPAMA-RE-1 - Developed Recreation). These lands include 380 acres in the existing SUP area, 53 acres in the SUP adjustment, and 0.01 acre at the existing cross-country warming hut.

Alternative 2 includes the expansion of guest service buildings at both Alpental and The Summit, designed and sited to relieve base area congestion and spread guests throughout the resort. Proposed development would include construction of a guest services building at Alpental, expansion of existing base area facilities at Summit West, construction of a new base lodge at Summit Central, expansion of the existing facilities at Silver Fir, creation of mountain-top restaurants at Summit East and Alpental, and renovation to several out-buildings, primarily ski school buildings.

Decision: We did not select Alternative 2 for several reasons. Alternative 2 includes numerous projects that have been withdrawn by the proponent, including the mountain-top restaurant and year-round gondola at Alpental, the *Easy Street* lift realignment, *Creek Run* lift and associated trails at Summit East, and the relocation of *Trail 49 (Summit Central-Summit East Crossover)*. Selection of Alternative 2 would have resulted in the greatest impact to habitat quality, quantity and connectivity of all the Action Alternatives because it would result in the removal of the greatest amount of mature forest habitat in Section 16 (see FEIS Table 4.6.3-1C page 4-347). We do not believe the amount of clearing in LSH proposed in Alternative 2 to develop the *Creek Run* lift and trails at Summit East is necessary to improve terrain distribution, circulation, and diversity of terrain at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie when compared to the more environmentally sensitive designs of Alternatives 3 and Modified Alternative 5. Without the 390-acre land donation within Section 21 for inclusion in the AMA for management as LSH (as discussed in Alternatives 3 and Modified Alternative 5) we agree with the analysis in the FEIS, which states that Alternative 2 would not be consistent with many of the AMA/LSR Standards and Guidelines (see FEIS Section 1.2.4 - Particularly Applicable Goals, Standards and Guidelines page 1-39 - 41) concerning neutral or beneficial effects to existing late-successional forest conditions (see FEIS Table 4.7-FEIS-1 page 4-430, and FEIS Table 4.7-FEIS-2 page 4-482).

Like Modified Alternative 5, Alternative 2 would re-route *Trail 49* to improve connectivity between Summit Central and Summit East. However, we believe the re-route of *Trail 49* would result increased impacts to Nordic Pass users (see FEIS Section 4.11 - Recreation page 4-611).

Finally, we did not select Alternative 2 because two projects that are components of Modified Alternative 5 and the Selected Alternative are not included in Alternative 2. Alternative 2 does not include the re-route of the PCNST or the increase in capacity for the *Edelweiss* chairlift at Alpental. Modified Alternative 5 and the Selected Alternative re-route the PCNST through a vegetated area adjacent to Summit West parking lot 1 (see FEIS Section 2.3.6.7 - Other Recreation Opportunities page 2-63). This re-route will improve the quality of the PCNST experience as hikers traverse through the ski area (see FEIS Section 4.11.5 – Impacts – Modified Alternative 5 page 4-623). We believe this re-route of the PCNST is more

responsive to public comment from trail users received following release of the DEIS (see FEIS Volume 5 – Response to Comments pages RTC-95, 105, 119-120, 175, 188-189). We also believe the increased capacity at Alpental to the top of Denny Mountain is needed, particularly on busy days (see FEIS Section 4.11.5 – Impacts – Modified Alternative 5 page 4-622). Modified Alternative 5 and the Selected Alternative address the long lift lines for skiers wishing to round-trip ski the Edelweiss bowl, Alternative 2 does not.

3.1.3 Alternative 3

Description: Alternative 3 modifies the Proposed Action by reducing development in Section 16 and was developed to address concerns to LSH and wildlife connectivity, Riparian Reserves and impacts to Nordic/backcountry skiers. Under Alternative 3, 390 acres would be donated by Ski Lifts, Inc. to the Federal Government for inclusion in the OWNF, and the SPAMA (as the donated acres are surrounded by SPAMA) which is managed as LSH.¹⁴ Under Alternative 3 the *Creek Run* chairlift and trails would not be developed at Summit East. At Alpental, no mountain-top restaurant or *Pulse Gondola* would be constructed to address issues associated with increased accessibility to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area.

A Forest Plan amendment would add a total of 17.01 acres to the SUP area at Summit East and Central, including Hyak Creek and the cross-country hut at Grand Junction and re-allocate these acres to AMA (SPAMA-RE-1 – Developed Recreation). The expansion would incorporate Hyak Creek into the SUP area and provide for construction and use of the proposed crossover trail between Summit East and Summit Central. The Forest Plan amendment would also reallocate a total of 397.01 acres of OWNF lands from AMA (ST-1 - Scenic Travel) to AMA (SPAMA-RE-1- Developed Recreation). These lands include 380 acres in the existing SUP area, 17 acres in the SUP adjustment, and 0.01 acre at the existing cross-country warming hut.

Under Alternative 3, The Summit’s CCC would increase from 8,140 to 9,990 skiers and Alpental’s CCC would increase from 1,880 to 2,620 skiers, for a total increase of approximately 26 percent, or 2,590 skiers for The Summit-at-Snoqualmie.

Decision: Although we did not select Alternative 3 as the Selected Alternative, Alternative 3 is most similar to our Decision of all the Action Alternatives, both in terms of projects approved by this Decision and the potential effects to the environment. Most notably, Alternative 3 does not include the *Creek Run* lift and trails at Summit East, nor does it include the *Pulse Gondola* or mountain-top restaurant at Alpental, as in our Selected Alternative. However, we did not select Alternative 3 because it would not sufficiently meet the need to increase the amount of intermediate and advanced-intermediate terrain at

¹⁴ This land donation would be acceptable to the US Government despite the fact that the mineral rights would not be transferred to the US. In a March 10, 2005 letter to Kimberly Bown, Director of Lands in Forest Service Region 6, Gregory Smith, Acting Director of Lands for the Forest Service Washington Office, indicated that outstanding interests (i.e., not owning the mineral rights) would not interfere with the purpose for which the land would be contributed to the Department of Agriculture (i.e., preservation of connectivity for old growth dependent species).

The Summit-at-Snoqualmie. Specifically, even though Alternative 3 includes the *Rampart* chairlift and associated trails at Summit East (similar to Alternative 2, Modified Alternative 5 and the Selected Alternative), we have found that Alternative 3 would not meet the need to improve terrain distribution as well due to the abandonment and re-vegetation of existing *Trails 55, 66, and 67* within Section 16 (see FEIS Figure 2.3.4-1). The Selected Alternative retains the existing trails, which will feed skiers to *Trails 61 and 63*.

Similar to Alternative 2, Alternative 3 would not provide for a re-route of the PCNST to a vegetated area adjacent to Summit West parking lot 1 or provide additional capacity on the *Edelweiss* chairlift at Alpental. Our rationale for not selecting Alternative 3 is the same as Alternative 2 with regard to *Edelweiss* and the PCNST.

Finally, we did not select Alternative 3 because it included the realignment of the *Easy Street* chairlift. This project has since been withdrawn from the Proposed Action by the proponent following release of the DEIS.

3.1.4 Alternative 4

Description: Alternative 4 was developed to analyze the effect of no new lift and trail development within Section 16 at Summit East. Alternative 4 modifies the Proposed Action by eliminating any new development in Section 16 (see FEIS Figures 1.1.1-1 and 2.3.5-1) and addresses concerns related to potential impacts to LSH, Nordic Pass (see FEIS Figure 2.3.2-5), backcountry skiers, wildlife connectivity and Riparian Reserves. Under Alternative 4 there would be no development of the *Creek Run* or *Rampart* chairlifts or trails described under Alternative 2 at Summit East and the SUP expansion would include only Hyak Creek. The night lighting expansion in the *Silver Fir* pod described in Alternative 2 would be eliminated under Alternative 4. At Alpental, the existing Alpental Road would be realigned outside of Riparian Reserves, Parking lots 4, 5, and 6 would be reduced in size, and Parking lot 7 would be eliminated altogether to allow for riparian restoration along the South Fork Snoqualmie River.

Under Alternative 4, The Summit's CCC would increase from 8,140 to 9,360 skiers and Alpental's CCC would increase from 1,880 to 2,920 for an increase of approximately 23 percent, or 2,260 skiers for The Summit-at-Snoqualmie.

Decision: Alternative 4 was developed to avoid new lift and trail development within Section 16 at Summit East. We did not select Alternative 4 primarily because expansion under Alternative 4 would result in the least certain viability of the operation at Summit East (see FEIS Section 4.11.4 – Impacts – Alternative 4 page 4-618 - 619). By not developing the *Rampart* chairlift or improving the crossover trails, specifically *Trail 71*, between Summit East and Summit Central (as in the Selected Alternative) skiers would be less likely to access Summit East as compared to any of the Action Alternatives (see FEIS Section 4.11.4 - Impacts – Alternative 4 page 4-618 - 619). We identified the viability of Summit East as a

Need for the project (see ROD Section 2.3.1 – Purpose and Need). We have found that the additional terrain (i.e., *Rampart*) and improved crossover trails (i.e., *Trails 71* and *49*) in the Selected Alternative addresses this need better than Alternative 4.

While Alternative 4 was developed to address issues developed during the scoping process related to wildlife habitat quantity and quality and wildlife connectivity, we believe other Action Alternatives (i.e., Alternative 3, Modified Alternative 5 and the Selected Alternative) provide a better solution. We feel the 390-acre Mill Creek land donation (see FEIS Section 2.3.4 – Alternative 3 – Reduced Section 16 Development page 2-53 - 54) included in the Selected Alternative has the highest potential to provide LSH for species that utilize the Gold Creek corridor. With the inclusion of the land donation, we believe the Selected Alternative better addresses these issues.

We did not select Alternative 4 because this alternative would not correct deficiencies in parking experienced during peak use days at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie. Many public comments on the DEIS cited the difficulty parking at Alpental and The Summit and subsequent effect on the recreational experience. Selection of Alternative 4 would result in a 12 percent decrease in available parking at Alpental from Alternative 1 (see FEIS Section 4.12.4 – Impacts – Alternative 4 page 4-637). The decrease in parking is due to the relocation of Alpental Road and elimination of Parking Lot 7 at Alpental. Our Decision approves the paving of parking lots throughout the ski area, improved stormwater management, and authorizes the use of a chemical de-icer/ice-inhibitor. We believe that through these improvements in stormwater and snow management the amount of sediment in Riparian Reserves can be reduced without decreasing available parking at Alpental. For this reason, we have decided not to select Alternative 4.

Like Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 5, Alternative 4 contains the year-round gondola and mountain-top restaurant at Alpental, and the *Easy Street* chairlift realignment which have been withdrawn by the proponent following release of the DEIS and therefore will not be part of this Decision.

Similar to Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, Alternative 4 would not provide for a re-route of the PCNST to a vegetated area adjacent to Summit West parking lot 1 or provide additional capacity on the *Edelweiss* chairlift at Alpental. Our rationale for not selecting Alternative 4 is the same as Alternative 2 with regard to *Edelweiss* and the PCNST.

3.1.5 Modified Alternative 5

Description: Modified Alternative 5 represents a reduced version of the Proposed Action, and addresses concerns over LSH, impacts to PCNST users, wildlife connectivity, and Riparian Reserves in Section 16. Under Modified Alternative 5, The Summit’s CCC would increase from 8,140 to 10,710 skiers and Alpental’s CCC would increase from 1,880 to 3,220 skiers for an increase of approximately 39 percent, or 3,910 skiers for The Summit-at-Snoqualmie. Modified Alternative 5 adjusts the Proposed Action by reducing development in Section 16, while still developing both the *Rampart* and *Creek Run* chairlifts.

Trails within the *Rampart* and *Creek Run* pods would be constructed with reduced widths and gladed rather than fully cleared (see FEIS Section 2.3.6.2 – Trails). Additionally, *Trail 49 (Summit Central-Summit East Crossover)* would follow a different alignment than in the Proposed Action (see FEIS Figure 2.3.6-1), resulting in less clearing (less than 50 feet wide as opposed to 109 feet in Alternative 2). The increased capacity at Alpental over all other alternatives is achieved through an upgrade of the *Edelweiss* chairlift within the existing alignment.

Modified Alternative 5 includes a re-route of the PCNST where it traverses the Summit West parking lot. The trail would be re-routed around the paved lot through an adjacent vegetated area.

Decision: We did not select Modified Alternative 5 for several reasons. Modified Alternative 5 includes numerous projects that have been withdrawn by the proponent following release of the DEIS. These projects include the mountain-top restaurant and year-round gondola at Alpental, the *Easy Street* lift realignment, *Creek Run* lift and associated trails at Summit East, and relocation of *Trail 49 (Summit Central-Summit East Crossover)*.

We believe the Selected Alternative reduces the impact of the proposal to Nordic Pass users by not authorizing the relocation of *Trail 49 (Summit Central-Summit East Crossover)*, as in Modified Alternative 5. We recognize that Modified Alternative 5 would have improved circulation between Summit Central and Summit East, however we feel the potential user conflicts between Nordic and alpine visitors resulting from this trail relocation could be avoided through the construction of a skier trestle along the existing trail, as in Alternative 3 (see ROD Appendix A; MM4).

Selection of Modified Alternative 5 would have met the stated needs (see ROD Section 2.3.1 – Purpose and Need) more completely than Alternatives 3 and 4 and represented a balance between the recreational needs of the ski area and the environmental consequences. We are convinced through our extensive coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that Modified Alternative 5 included sufficient mitigation to approve the projects proposed, however many of the key components of Modified Alternative 5 were withdrawn by the proponent and therefore could not be included in this Decision.

4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND TRIBAL CONSULTATION

In accordance with NEPA and USFS policy, government, public, and other agency involvement was initiated early in the environmental analysis process and continued through the completion of the DEIS.

Scoping is the process used to determine the scope of the environmental analysis to be conducted. It is used early in the NEPA process to identify, among other items: (1) the issues to be addressed; (2) the depth of the analysis; (3) alternatives to the Proposed Action; and (4) potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action.

The FEIS was developed with extensive public participation. The scoping process began with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on January 29, 1999. A scoping document was mailed to over 700 individuals, organizations, agencies, and Tribes, and over 100 responses were received. Two informational meetings were held at the Cle Elum Ranger Station and the West Coast Bellevue Hotel on February 8 and February 10, 1999, respectively. These meetings had three purposes: (1) provide information to the public regarding The Summit-at-Snoqualmie's Proposed Action; (2) brief the public on the environmental analysis process used to decide which projects in the Proposed Action would be developed; and (3) allow the public to ask questions of the USFS and The Summit-at-Snoqualmie staff regarding the Proposed Action and the environmental analysis process.

Additional public involvement and government consultation activities included:

1. Formal USFS correspondence with respective Tribal leaders (see Section 1.6.1 – Tribal Government Consultation for a detailed discussion about Tribal Government consultation);
2. Site tours by the Inter-Disciplinary Team and other interested agencies;
3. A project update mailer mailed to scoping respondents, Federal, State, and local agencies, and area Tribes; and
4. Release of the DEIS in December 2005.

4.1 Response to Scoping Document and Public Meetings

There were over 100 individual written comments received during the public scoping period for the Proposed Action. All issues identified through the scoping process were divided into two categories. The first category included significant issues that resulted in the formulation of alternatives to the Proposed Action (see FEIS Section 1.5 - Scoping, Significant Issues, and Public Participation page 1-47), including those alternatives eliminated from detailed analysis (see FEIS Appendix A – Alternatives Considered and Modifications to the Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP). The second category included issues required by law, regulation, or policy or that were of particular public concern, and that could be addressed in the general context of the analysis (i.e., effects disclosure, mitigation, and monitoring).

4.2 Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Public issues identified from the scoping process were used to guide the completion of the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for The Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP Proposal* (DEIS). The full DEIS (hardcopy and/or compact disk) or internet download instructions were distributed to over 1,598 individuals, organizations and other agencies on December 19, 2005. The Notice of Availability of the DEIS was published in the *Federal Register* on December 23, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 246) and initiated an extended 60-day public comment period that ended on February 16, 2006. A total of 40 hardcopies and 1,550 CDs were mailed to the public and the DEIS was posted on the USFS website.

In response, during the public comment period to the DEIS, a total of 1,503 comment letters were received. Out of the 1,503 response letters, 1,137 comments were identified by the USFS as substantive comments according to guidance contained in 40 CFR 1503.4 (b).

The USFS reviewed and analyzed all public comments received to determine whether we needed to: 1) modify existing alternatives; 2) develop new alternatives; 3) supplement, improve or modify the analysis; or 4) make factual corrections. All substantive comments that were received, and the USFS responses that describe how the comments were addressed are included in FEIS Volume 5 – Response to Comments. Any changes or modifications to the DEIS resulting from public comments have been included in the FEIS (see FEIS Appendix A – Alternatives Considered and Modifications to the Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP).

4.3 Cooperating Agencies

Any agency that has jurisdiction or special expertise relative to a Proposed Action may be requested to participate as a cooperating agency. In addition, agencies can request to be included as a cooperating agency. USFWS is a cooperating agency in this NEPA process and has ESA jurisdiction over non-marine fish, wildlife and plant species, such as the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet that are listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered (see FEIS Section 1.6.2 – Interagency Coordination and Consultation page 1-58). The USFS must consult with USFWS concerning the effects of proposed USFS actions on listed species and species proposed for listing under USFWS jurisdiction. Because of this the USFWS has participated in The Summit-at-Snoqualmie NEPA process in their regulatory role under the ESA.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

In accordance with CEQ regulations in 40 CFR Part 1505.2(b), we are required to identify the alternative or alternatives that could be considered environmentally preferable. The environmentally preferable alternative is defined by CEQ as the alternative that promotes national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA Section 101. The environmentally preferable alternative is not necessarily the alternative that will be implemented, but is ordinarily the alternative that causes the least damage to the physical and biological environment, and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources.

Based on the review of the alternatives, we have identified Alternative 3 to be the environmentally preferable alternative (see FEIS Section 2.3.4 – Alternative 3 – Reduced Section 16 Development page 2-53). Of the alternatives analyzed, we believe that Alternative 3 best accomplishes NEPA’s goals to attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or unintended environmental consequences. Alternative 3 minimizes impacts to Riparian Reserves and LSH in Section 16. Additionally, Alternative 3 includes the 390-acre Mill Creek land donation for

incorporation into the AMA for management as LSH. As a result, Alternative 3 has the highest potential to provide LSH for species that utilize the Gold Creek corridor.

Alternative 3 includes only the *Rampart* chairlift and associated trails within Section 16, as compared to Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 5. As a result, the impacts to riparian habitat and mature forest are less than Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 5. In addition, Alternative 3 includes the Mill Creek land donation which is not included in Alternative 4. The Mill Creek land donation will allow increased habitat connectivity between the Gold Creek corridor and other mature forest habitat to the west and south, more so than any other alternative. This would essentially serve as a second wildlife corridor through Snoqualmie Pass.

Although Alternative 3 is the environmentally preferred alternative, we believe that our Selected Alternative, a combination of Alternative 1, Alternative 3, and Modified Alternative 5, best balances the Purpose and Need for ski area expansion at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie with the necessary resource protection.

6.0 FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

6.1 National Forest Management Act

NFMA and its regulations (36 CFR 219) established guidelines for National Forest management. As required by NFMA regulations, we find that this project will be consistent with the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie and Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans, as amended. The Selected Alternative will meet standards and guidelines for lands allocated to:

- OWNF: Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area, Riparian Reserves, and Management Prescription SPAMA-RE-1 – Developed Recreation, and
- MBSNF: Administratively Withdrawn Alpine Lakes Management Area 27 (MA27D) – Developed Site..

6.1.1 Consistency with the Forest Plan, as Amended

The Mount Baker-Snoqualmie Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 1990a) and the Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 1990b) were developed and approved using the provisions of the 1982 planning rule, which was the planning rule in effect prior to November 9, 2000. The USFS now has a new planning rule (36 CFR 219, published in the Federal Register on April 21, 2008) referred to as the 2008 planning rule. The 2008 rule specifically states at 36 CFR 219.14(b)(4) that, for plans developed under the 1982 rule, the 1982 planning rule is without effect. There remain no obligations from that regulation, except those that are those specifically in the plan. The only requirement specifically provided in the 2008 rule related to projects is at 36 CFR 219.8(e), requiring that projects and

activities must be consistent with the applicable plan components. As required by 36 CFR 219.8(e), I have found that this project is consistent with the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie and Wenatchee Forest Plans with the amendment identified below (see FEIS Section 4.14.2.1 – Lands Within the Summit-at-Snoqualmie Study Area page 4-651 – 652).

Our Decision to implement the Selected Alternative is consistent with the long-term goals and objectives of the *MBSNF Land and Resource Management Plan*, as amended, the *WNF Land and Resource Management Plan*, as amended, and the *SPAMA Plan* (USFS and USFWS 1997).¹⁵ Specifically, improvement of existing areas is appropriate and consistent with the concepts of multiple-use management and recreational objectives of the MBSNF and the OWNF. The project was designed in conformance with Forest Plan standards and incorporates appropriate Forest Plan guidelines for Management Prescription SPAMA-RE-1 – Developed Recreation (OWNF); and Administratively Withdrawn - MA27D - Developed Site (MBSNF). The RE-1 prescription encourages the development of partnerships with private providers (e.g., Ski Lifts, Inc.), through permits, joint ventures, and cooperative agreements in order to provide high quality recreation sites and facilities with development of activities and opportunities desired by the recreating public. This prescription is applicable to existing and potential developed recreation sites within the full spectrum of Recreational Opportunity Spectrum settings (USDA 1990b, IV-159). The MA27D prescription is applied to areas that are substantially modified for campgrounds, boating, ski areas, summer home tracts, administrative sites, etc.

Our Decision to authorize the Selected Alternative is consistent with the SPAMA Standards and Guidelines because it is neutral or beneficial to LSH and connectivity, as described in FEIS Section 4.6.9 - Adaptive Management Area Standards and Guidelines (see FEIS page 4-412) and FEIS Table 4.6.2-1 (see FEIS pages 4-413 – 428). The Decision is consistent because the 390-acre land donation would provide an additional 45 acres of existing mature forest, including Western hemlock and Pacific silver fir (see FEIS Table 4.5.2-1B page 4-294). The remaining second growth forest would be managed as LSR consistent with the SPAMA. Therefore, we agree with the analysis in the FEIS that the land donation would compensate for loss of 26.35 acres of mature forest throughout the SUP area (see FEIS Table 4.5.2-1A page 4-293), and more specifically, the approximately 6.4 acres of LSH that would be affected in Section 16 by the installation of the *Rampart* chairlift and associated trails (see ROD Figure 2). In essence, the land donation provides approximately six times the acreage of existing LSH compared to the 6.5 acres impacted in Section 16. We agree that, overall, the land donation would increase LSH on NFS lands in the vicinity of Snoqualmie Pass in the short-term (i.e., 45 acres of existing mature forest) and in the long-term (i.e., the remainder of the 390 acres). Although the majority of the donated land is in an early-seral condition, the FEIS shows that management of this land as LSH will contribute to an improving trend in LSH in the Snoqualmie Pass area over the long-term (see FEIS Illustration 4.6.4- FEIS-1 page 4-381 and FEIS Section 4.6.4.2 – Habitat Connectivity pages 4-380 – 4-381). Our Decision

¹⁵ Major amendments include the ROD for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (USDA and USDI 1994), commonly referred to as the Northwest Forest Plan.

to reallocate lands in Section 16 at Summit East is consistent with the Forest Plan guidelines for Management Prescription SPAMA-RE-1 – Developed Recreation, and Administratively Withdrawn – MA27D – Developed Site, due to the developed nature of the site and presence of ski area facilities in the areas that we have decided to reallocate to SPAMA-RE-1 (see FEIS Section 2.3.2.1 – Applicable Land Allocations pages 1-32 - 33).

The 2008 planning rule provides for a three year transition period for forest plan amendments (36 CFR 219.14[b][2]). During the transition period, amendments may be made using the procedures from the 1982 planning rule. This decision includes a non-significant site-specific forest plan amendment to the Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan following the 1982 planning rule procedures.

Based on our review of the Land and Resource Management Plan and the analysis disclosed in the FEIS, we believe our Decision to authorize Amendment 27 to the WNF Forest Plan is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan. This Decision will correct allocations within the existing SUP boundary and adjustments to the boundary included in this Decision. By reallocating a total of 397.01 acres of OWNF lands from AMA (ST-1 Scenic Travel) to AMA (SPAMA-RE-1 – Developed Recreation), the allocation will be more consistent with the existing and proposed use of the land.

Based on the narrative above and information in the Project Record, we find the amendment to the Wenatchee Land and Resource Management Plan is a non-significant Forest Plan amendment under NFMA on the basis of criteria described in Forest Service Manual (FSM) 1926.5 – *Changes to the Forest Plan That are Not Significant* (see ROD Section 2.2 – Other Elements of the Decision).

The EIS documents that no impacts to special status plant species will occur as a result of our Decision (see FEIS Section 4.5.4 – Impacts – Alternative 3 page 4-315, and FEIS Appendix C - Botanical Technical Report).

We have also determined that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for Riparian Reserves, as described in the Northwest Forest Plan ROD (see FEIS Table 4.3.7-1 page 4-196, and FEIS Table 4.3.7-2 page 4-204).

The FEIS also references, and incorporates information from, relevant watershed analyses, including the *South Fork Snoqualmie River Watershed Analysis* (USFS 1995) and *Upper Yakima Watershed Analysis* (USFS 1997). These analyses indicate that short-term effects will result from the implementation of the project. Based on the analyses in these studies, we have determined that, even though the project will have measureable effects at the site scale, as described in FEIS Section 4.7 – Aquatic Conservation Strategy, the Selected Alternative **meets** the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives over the long-term, at the 5th field (South Fork Snoqualmie River and Upper Yakima River) scale. As a result, the project will be consistent with Riparian Reserves Standards and Guidelines (see ROD Section 2.3.3 – Aquatic

Conservation Strategy Finding and Rationale, and FEIS Section 4.7 - Aquatic Conservation Strategy page 4-429).

6.1.2 **Best Available Science**

Our conclusion is based on a review of the record that shows a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgment of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk. The project record includes scientific papers and reports as well as demographic, biological and economic data used in the FEIS analysis.

6.2 National Environmental Policy Act

NEPA and its implementing regulations establish the basis, process, and content requirements for the preparation of detailed statements for proposed actions. The entire process for the FEIS followed the regulations and direction outline in 40 CFR Parts 1500 to 1508 (CEQ Regulations), FSM 1950 and Forest Service Handbook 1909.15. A full range of alternatives was examined in detail, including a No Action Alternative, to allow the reader to clearly compare the alternatives. There were extensive opportunities for public involvement during this analysis, and Government-to-Government Tribal consultation throughout the process. We used the comments received both during scoping and in response to the DEIS to modify our Preferred Alternative, and develop our decision. Therefore, we find this decision fully complies with NEPA.

6.3 Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

Issues connected with the requirements of National Historic Preservation Act were considered early in the NEPA process for The Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP. The Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP (i.e., the Selected Alternative) complies with Section 106 of this Act and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800) by taking into account the effects of the action on historic properties and by consulting with the SHPO and consulting parties.

The area of potential effects includes all land within the ski area, totaling approximately 1,864 acres of NFS lands, 1,500 acres of private land held by Ski Lifts, Inc., and about 400 acres of private land held by the Plum Creek Timber Company. We have determined that the Selected Alternative will have no effect on historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Nine sites were identified in The Summit-at-Snoqualmie project area, of which one site was determined to be eligible for listing on the NRHP, six were determined ineligible for listing, and two may or may not be eligible (see FEIS Table 3.9.2-1). For sites that are eligible or may be eligible for listing on the NRHP, a professional archaeological monitor will be on-site during any ground disturbing activity that is within 80 meters of a positive shovel probe (see Table ROD-A-1, MR39). Development, including vegetation removal and equipment staging, will be excluded within 50 meters of these sites (see Table ROD-A-1,

MR39). However, if surface erosion is a concern, hand seeding and mulching could occur after coordination with the MBSNF archaeologist (see Table ROD-A-1, MR1, MR39).

The USFS has completed consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on the determination that no eligible heritage resources would be adversely affected by The Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP. The SHPO provided concurrence in a letter dated July 28, 2008.

6.4 Endangered Species Act

Consultation on the Selected Alternative was conducted with the USFWS in accordance with Section 7 of the ESA. A Biological Assessment (see FEIS Appendix K – Biological Assessment) was prepared to describe the effects of the Selected Alternative on the ESA-listed wildlife species and submitted to the USFWS for formal consultation on March 23, 2008. On July 2, 2008, the USFWS provided a Letter of Concurrence (13410-2008-I-0226) stating that The Summit-at-Snoqualmie Ski Area Expansion is “not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of northern spotted owl and is not likely to destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat.” The USFWS concurred with the USFS determination that the Selected Alternative “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” the northern spotted owl, the marbled murrelet, bull trout, Canada lynx, grizzly bear, and gray wolf. The Biological Assessment also determined that there will be “no effect” on designated northern spotted owl critical habitat and marbled murrelet critical habitat (see FEIS Appendix K - Biological Assessment).

There will be “no effect” to listed anadromous salmonids or Essential Fish Habitat as defined under the Magnuson-Stevens Act as no anadromous salmonids are present within the project area. The project “may effect, but is not likely to adversely affect” bull trout, as described in the Biological Assessment for the FEIS (see FEIS Appendix K – Biological Assessment).

Surveys were conducted for Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive plant species in The Summit-at-Snoqualmie Study Area between 1994 and 2003 (see FEIS Section 3.5.1.4 - Special-Status Plant Species page 3-120 - 122). The list of species suspected to occur within the project area is available in FEIS Appendix C – Botanical Resources Report. No Proposed, Endangered, or Threatened species were observed during botanical surveys completed at The Summit-at-Snoqualmie. As a result, no impacts to known or previously documented Proposed, Endangered, and Threatened plant species are expected to occur (see FEIS Section 4.5 – Vegetation page 4-304).

6.5 Executive Order 11990 (Wetlands) and Clean Water Act

Executive Order 11990 directs federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, both long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands. The Clean Water Act provides a regulatory framework for evaluating and authorizing activities that affect Waters of the United States. The Summit-at-Snoqualmie MDP (i.e., the Selected Alternative) includes action in Waters of the United States, including wetlands, for the construction of MDP facilities. As specified in Table ROD-2,

Ski Lifts, Inc. will be required to coordinate with the USACE, USEPA, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, WDOE, and WDFW in order to obtain permits under Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, as well as NPDES and HPA requirements. Impacts to Waters of the United States will be mitigated, as specified under Section 404b(1) of the Clean Water Act (i.e., avoidance, minimization, compensation).

6.6 Aquatic Conservation Strategy

Our findings relating to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy are provided in ROD Section 2.3.3 - Aquatic Conservation Strategy Finding and Rationale. We have found that the Selected Alternative meets the ACS.

6.7 Other Relevant Laws and Regulations

We have considered all other relevant laws and regulations that this project may affect. This project was prepared under and complies with the regulations for NEPA (see Section 6.2 – National Environmental Policy Act). Standards and guidelines established in the amended WNF Forest Plan and MBSNF Forest Plan, as applicable, have been met, except where noted above (see Section 6.1.1 – Consistency with the Forest Plan, as Amended). The WNF and MBSNF Forest Plans were prepared in accordance with the National Forest Management Act (see Section 6.1 – National Forest Management Act). This project is consistent with the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 because it provides for outdoor recreation, one of the multiple uses outlined in the 1960 Act, and because it protects the productivity of natural resources and availability of recreation on NFSL (see FEIS Section 4.12.2.1 – Lands within The Summit-at-Snoqualmie Study Area page 4-652).

This project is consistent with the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and the National Historic Preservation Act because surveys have been conducted for archaeological and historic resources, potential indirect impacts can be minimized through monitoring, and no known heritage resources will be adversely affect (see FEIS Section 4.9.2 – Impacts Common to all Action Alternatives pages 4-558 -4-560). This project is consistent with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 and the Indian Sacred Sites Executive Order 13007 because potential cultural sites have been analyzed, and a cultural monitor will be on-site during project implementation in order to minimize effects to cultural resources (see FEIS Section 4.9.2 – Impacts Common to all Action Alternatives pages 4-558 – 4-560 and FEIS Section 4.9.6 – Impacts – Modified Alternative 5). Consultation with affected Indian Tribes has been completed in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (see Section 6.3 – Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act).

This project is consistent with the Invasive Species Executive Order 13112, as it minimizes and mitigates the potential of noxious weed establishment during project implementation (see FEIS Section 4.5.3 – Impacts – Alternative 2 [Proposed Action] pages 4-304 – 4-305).

This project is consistent with Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 as it would result in no disproportionate effects to low-income or minority populations (see FEIS Section 4.10.2.7 – Environmental Justice page 4-583).\

This project is consistent with the Protection of Migratory Birds Executive Order 13186 and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act as it would minimize and mitigate the potential effects to migratory birds, particularly during nesting season (see Section 4.6.3.1 – Wildlife Habitats and Associated Species pages 4-357 – 4-358). This project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect threatened, endangered or proposed listed species under the Endangered Species Act (see Section 6.4 – Endangered Species Act), and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife has concurred with this determination (see FEIS Appendix K – Biological Assessment). The Magnuson-Stevens Act does not apply to this project because the project area does not contain any anadromous fish species (see Section 6.4 – Endangered Species Act).

This project will meet water quality criteria set by the Clean Water Act and will not exacerbate 303(d) listed parameters (see FEIS Section 4.3.3.1 – Upper Yakima River Watershed pages 4-99 – 4-104 and FEIS Section 4.3.3.2 – Upper South Fork Snoqualmie River Watershed pages 4-122 – 4-125). This project is consistent with the Protection of Floodplains Executive Order 11988 because it would result in no measurable effect to floodplains at the 5th field scale (see FEIS Tables 4.7-FEIS-1 and 4.7-FEIS-2 pages 4-462, 4-646, 4-516, 4-518, and 4-520). Impacts to floodplains and wetlands are minimized or mitigated as required by Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 (see Section 6.5 - Executive Order 11990 [Wetlands] and Clean Water Act, as well as FEIS Section 4.3.3.1 – Upper Yakima River Watershed pages 4-91 – 4-95 and FEIS Section 4.3.3.2 – Upper South Fork Snoqualmie River Watershed pages 4-115 – 4-118).

The project will meet national ambient air quality standards set by the Clean Air Act as amended (see FEIS Section 4.8.4.1 – Air Quality Standards and Regulations pages 4-538 – 4-541), and will not result in visibility effects to surrounding areas (see FEIS Section 4.8.4.2 – Visibility page 4-543). Although noise levels will temporarily increase during construction, maximum environmental noise levels set by Washington State and EPA noise guidelines will be met, and long-term noise level increases will be imperceptible (see FEIS Section 4.16.2 – Impacts Common to All Action Alternatives pages 4-677 – 4-679).

In addition, we have considered numerous documents incorporated by reference in the FEIS. We have also considered the environmental effects and consequences disclosed in the FEIS and comments received during the public involvement process. Based on the analysis in the FEIS, we have concluded that our Decision to approve the Selected Alternative with the necessary mitigation measures, management

requirements, other management provisions and monitoring requirements meets all applicable laws, regulations, and land policies, and is in the public interest.¹⁶

7.0 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

If no appeal is filed, this Decision may be implemented on, but not before, the 5th business days after the close of the appeal period. If an appeal is filed, the Decision may not be implemented until 15 days following the date of appeal disposition, depending on the nature of that disposition. Implementation will be carried out as described in ROD Section 2.2.4 – Implementation of the Selected Alternative.

8.0 ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL

This Decision is subject to appeal only by individuals or organizations who submitted comments during the comment period pursuant to USFS regulations at 36 CFR 215.6. Any written notice of appeal of this Decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 215.14 (Appeal Content). The notice of appeal, including attachments, must be postmarked, hand delivered, or faxed to the Regional Forester, ATTN: 1570 Appeals, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208-3623, FAX, (503) 808-2255; or sent electronically to appeals-pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us within 45 days of the date of publication of this notice in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and the *Wenatchee World*. Hand deliveries may be made to the Pacific Northwest Regional Office, 333 SW First Avenue, Portland, OR 97204 between 7:45 AM and 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, except legal holidays. The publication date of the legal notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this Decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. It is the responsibility of each individual and organization to ensure their appeal is received in a timely manner. For electronically mailed appeals, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive such an automated acknowledgement, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipts by other means.

Electronic appeals must be submitted only to the email address shown above as part of the actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word, rich text format or Adobe portable document format (pdf) only. E-mails in other formats or containing viruses cannot be accepted.

¹⁶ See FEIS Table 1.7-1 page 1-59, FEIS Section 4.1 – Climate and Snow pages 4-16 – 4-19, FEIS Section 4.2 – Geology and Soils pages 4-20 – 4-69, FEIS Section 4.3 – Water and Watershed Resources pages 4-70 – 4-227, FEIS Section 4.4 – Fisheries pages 4-228 – 4-288, FEIS Section 4.5 – Vegetation pages 4-289 – 4-339, FEIS Section 4.6 – Wildlife pages 4-340 – 4-428, FEIS Section 4.7 – Aquatic Conservation Strategy pages 4-429 – 4-535, FEIS Section 4.8 – Air Quality pages 4-536 – 4-556, FEIS Section 4.9 – Heritage Resources and Reserved Treaty Rights pages 4-557 – 4-573, FEIS Section 4.10 – Social and Economic Resources pages 4-574 – 4-598, FEIS Section 4.11 – Recreation pages 4-599 – 4-629, FEIS Section 4.12 – Transportation pages 4-630 – 4-639, FEIS Section 4.13 – Utilities pages 4-640 – 4-650, FEIS Section 4.14 – Land Use pages 4-651 – 4-659, FEIS Section 4.15 – Visual Resources pages 4-660 – 4-676, and FEIS Section 4.16 – Noise pages 4-677 – 4-685.

Ski Lifts, Inc., the affected applicant, may alternatively appeal this Decision pursuant to 36 CFR 251, Subpart C. Any written notice of appeal of this Decision by the applicant under 36 CFR 251 must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 251.90, Content of Notice of Appeal. The notice of appeal, including attachments, must be postmarked, hand delivered, sent electronically, or faxed to the Appeal Reviewing Officer within 45 days of the publication date of the legal notice for this Decision in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. The Appeal Reviewing Officer for this project is: Regional Forester, ATTN: 1570 Appeals, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208-3623, FAX, (503) 808-2255; email, appeals-pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Hand deliveries may be made to the Pacific Northwest Regional Office, 333 SW First Avenue, Portland, OR 97204 between 7:45 am and 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, except legal holidays.

Simultaneously, a copy of the appeal should also be mailed to MBSNF Supervisor Y. Robert Iwamoto, 2930 Wetmore Avenue Suite 3A, Everett, WA 98201; sent electronically to: appeals-pacificnorthwest-mtbaker-snoqualmie@fs.fed.us; faxed to: (425) 783-0214; or hand delivered to the above address between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday except legal holidays.

For Information, Contact:

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Y. Robert Iwamoto, Forest Supervisor
Forest Supervisor
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

10/21/08
Date


Rebecca Lockett Heath
Forest Supervisor
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

10.21.08
Date

9.0 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A:

**MITIGATION MEASURES, MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS AND
OTHER MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS INCLUDED IN THE
SELECTED ALTERNATIVE**

Appendix A

**Table ROD-A-1:
Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions
Included in the Selected Alternative**

Mitigation Measures	
MM1	Manage the mature forest in Section 16 beyond ski trails to maintain large woody debris, maintain 70% canopy where it exists, and maintain forest habitat conditions. <i>This Mitigation Measure would have a moderate effectiveness rating (Courtney et al. 2004).</i>
MM2	The Summit-at-Snoqualmie will donate approximately 390 acres of private land in the Mill Creek watershed for inclusion in the OWNF. The land would then be managed for LSH. The land donation would offset proposed impacts occurring within Riparian Reserves and Section 16 (<i>Creek Run</i> and <i>Rampart</i> pods). <i>This Mitigation Measure would have a high effectiveness rating (USFS,2000).</i>
MM3	The Summit-at-Snoqualmie will develop a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) that will address traffic congestion created at peak times at the I-90 interchange; pedestrian safety in general and at identified pedestrian crossings; improvements at pedestrian crossings including illumination, signing, pavement markings, and a certified flagger; illumination requirements on SR 906; carpooling, vanpooling, transit, etc. to reduce congestion on SR 906 and at the I-90 interchanges; notifying patrons of pass conditions prior to departure, including restrictions; fee parking at approved parking lots, and its impacts to SR906; congestion that inhibits WSDOT's ability to maintain SR 906, and the blocking of emergency response vehicles; residents' inability to access to their homes due to ski patrons blocking their driveways; and general guide, outdoor advertising and motorist information signing requirements <i>This Mitigation Measure would have a moderate effectiveness rating (logic).</i>
MM4	The Summit-at-Snoqualmie will construct a skier trestle along the existing <i>Trail 49</i> to reduce the uphill gradient as <i>Trail 49</i> crosses Hyak Creek within the existing powerline right-of-way. The trestle will be no greater than 50 feet wide and require no in-stream activities. No clearing outside of the existing powerline right-of-way will take place. Any structural supports required to construct the trestle will be located outside the top-of-bank. <i>This Mitigation Measure will have a moderate effectiveness rating (logic).</i>
Management Requirements	
Watershed Resources	
MR1	Field-certified, weed-free straw will be applied to a depth of 3 inches on all disturbed sites that have no other erosion control mulch prescription. Applications will be made prior to heavy rainstorms during construction and after construction is complete to protect water quality
MR2	Excess soil material from construction sites will be transported to a suitable upland site, as specified in the project-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and approved by the USFS, so that it is stored outside of stream or ditch corridors, wetlands and Riparian Buffers.
MR3	Erosion control filter fabric will be placed underneath culvert outfalls, building drainages, and rock apron drainages to prevent downslope gully erosion.
MR4	Felling and yarding of trees will occur while snow still blankets and protects the soil surface to minimize erosion.
MR5	Project-specific SWPPPs will specify the use of sediment traps above ditches, waterbars, and culvert outlets to trap sediment and prevent sediment deposition in streams. Sediment traps will be maintained and cleaned periodically (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan).

**Table ROD-A-1:
Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions
Included in the Selected Alternative**

MR6	In order to help maintain bank stability, native shrubs and herbaceous vegetation will be planted to achieve 80 percent cover in 5 years in all areas within 10 meters of the stream (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan).
MR7	All Management Requirements/Constraints and Mitigation Measures listed in the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) MOA with the WDFW will be implemented for each project involving an HPA. Any in-channel construction will be completed during periods specified in the HPA from the WDFW.
MR8	When the use of culverts cannot be avoided, they will be designed to accommodate 100-year flows, with considerations for debris, fish passage (if applicable) and passage of low-mobility, riparian-dependent species (e.g., bottomless arch culverts, if applicable). Culverts will periodically be inspected for debris jams and cleaned as necessary. Hydraulic permits will be obtained for all activities in stream channels. All channel modification proposals will be included in a project-specific SWPPP, which will be reviewed and approved by the USFS prior to construction. Documentation of alternatives considered will be required for the USFS to consider a proposal.
MR9	Project-specific SWPPPs will specify that road crossings and utility line trenched crossings of streams will be avoided where possible. Unavoidable stream crossings will be oriented perpendicular to the stream channel. If construction equipment must cross a channel, it will be limited to a one-time crossing; crossing will occur in an area that minimizes disturbance to the stream bed and banks and a temporary platform will be created to cross the channel if necessary. The USFS and the WDFW will approve all stream crossing locations and proposed methods of crossing prior to construction.
MR10	New and existing stream crossings will be monitored according to the MDP Implementation Plan (FEIS Appendix F) to verify that erosion is not initiated.
MR11	The final location and spacing of water bars and other cross-slope drainage structures and maintenance proposals for sediment control structures will be determined in cooperation with the USFS and specified in project-specific SWPPPs. Spacing and general locations of culverts will be planned by adhering to the guidelines contained in the current memorandum of understanding between the Washington Department of Ecology and the National Forests in Washington State. Where necessary, water bars will be lined with erosion control fabric, sod, and/or mulch to prevent failures prior to the establishment of vegetation. Field-certified, weed-free straw mulch will be applied. Any existing water bars disturbed during construction will be repaired.
MR12	If flooding or weather results in water quality not meeting current State standards for surface water quality, operations will stop until the conditions improve and the site stabilization has been approved by USFS personnel. Work stoppage procedures will be established in project-specific SWPPPs.
MR13	Watershed processes will be monitored according to the Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan (FEIS Appendix F).
MR14	A Spill Prevention and Response Plan will be developed and approved by the USFS as part of SWPPPs. Petroleum products will not be discharged into drainages or bodies of water. No fuels will be stored within Riparian Buffers. All petroleum products will be secured in self-contained safety cans.
MR15	A SWPPP will be developed and approved by the USFS and then implemented for all proposed projects before any construction begins.
MR16	Water quality monitoring for parameters (e.g., turbidity, pH, temperature, etc.) before, during, and after completion of the individual projects will be performed to ensure that the BMPs in the SWPPP are followed and effective.

**Table ROD-A-1:
Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions
Included in the Selected Alternative**

MR17	Clearing limits and trees proposed for removal during lift line and road construction will be reviewed and approved by the USFS prior to ground disturbance.
MR18	Erosion control fabric will be installed on disturbed areas of steep slopes around waterways as specified in project-specific SWPPPS and approved by the USFS and The Summit-at-Snoqualmie.
MR19	Hay bales and silt fences will be placed immediately upslope of clearing and regrade areas to reduce the amount of surface water entering a newly disturbed area. Water bars will be constructed within the newly disturbed areas to minimize downslope water movement through the sites, and direct water away from stream channels and wetlands.
Fisheries	
MR20	Follow USFS and WDFW Memorandum of understanding (USFS and WDFW, 1997) for all projects in waters on National Forest lands in the State of Washington.
MR21	Follow WDFW streambank protection guidelines for stream crossing structures (WDFW, 2003).
Vegetation	
MR22	During construction of trails in Section 16 (Summit East – Creek Run and Rampart pods), a USFS botanist, or equivalent specialist, will assist construction crews with layout of ski trails to avoid, where possible, rootwads with <i>S. pennata</i> present.
MR23	A 5-year monitoring plan will be established to record condition and abundance of the known locations of <i>S. pennata</i> within the Study Area in Section 16.
MR24	A 5-year monitoring plan will be established to record condition and abundance of the known locations of <i>G. douglasiana</i> after construction around the sensitive plant site is complete.
MR25	Place construction fence and silt fence at edge of clearing area for ski trail by the new lift terminal to restrict movement of machines and work crews in the wetland supporting <i>G. douglasiana</i> near the proposed bottom terminal of the Wildside lift.
MR26	If any new populations of special-status plant species are encountered during the construction process, work shall be suspended in that area until the MBSNF botanist is consulted.
MR27	Under the Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan (Appendix F), tree removal would be selective (field-fitted in cooperation with a USFS botanist or equivalent specialist) during construction and trail clearing to maintain 70% cover where it currently exists and to field-fit around a <i>S. pennata</i> location.
MR28	Applicable best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented during construction of all MDP projects to minimize the introduction and establishment of noxious weeds as directed by Executive Order 13112 (1999) and USFS regional policy (USFS, 2004a). Provisions in the <i>OWNF Weed Management and Prevention Strategy and BMPs</i> (USFS 2002) and the <i>MBSNF Forest Plan's Strategy for New Invaders</i> (USDA 2005) would be applied to prevent the establishment and spread of noxious weeds.
MR29	An Erosion Control Plan will be included in the SWPPP for construction documents for proposed projects. The plan will include revegetation techniques and will be approved by the USFS before any ground disturbance occurs. Techniques will include redressing disturbed areas with salvaged topsoil, applying mulch (straw or other material approved by the USFS) over the area to be revegetated, applying seed mixes as outlined in other mitigation measures, and using fertilizer where appropriate to ensure growth of germinated seeds.
MR30	The Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan (FEIS Appendix F) for the Study Area will be used as guidance for maintaining vegetation on ski trails during operation of facilities.

**Table ROD-A-1:
Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions
Included in the Selected Alternative**

MR31	Cut trees will be stockpiled in the nearest large, open clearing such as adjacent ski trails, parking lots, and other artificially cleared areas, as specified in the project-specific SWPPP and approved by the USFS. Wetlands and sensitive plant locations will not be used to store cut logs or slash. Slash piles will also be created in the openings. Large slash piles will be burned during appropriate periods under USFS guidance to ensure appropriate seasonal fire policies are being followed.
MR32	Trail clearing techniques will include feathering, scalloping, and possibly crown topping at the trail edge to reduce the potential for windthrow. Tree removal techniques will be specified in a project-specific SWPPP, which will be approved by a USFS botanist or equivalent specialist prior to implementation.
MR33	During the engineering design phase for chairlift construction, towers will be designed to be placed outside of sensitive plant populations if engineering design allows.
MR34	Project-specific SWPPPs will specify that silt fences and hay bales from USFS-approved sources will be installed around wetlands adjacent to construction areas.
Wildlife	
MR35	Project activities generating noise above ambient forest levels or otherwise creating disturbances will not occur within occupied ungulate winter habitat (from December 1 to April 15) or within ungulate calving, fawning, or kidding habitat (from April 15 to June 15) as directed by the MBSNF Forest Plan or as determined at specific sites by a wildlife biologist.
MR36	Implement an erosion control plan, reviewed and approved by the USFS, as recommended in the Washington Department of Ecology Stormwater Management Manuals for all projects on privately owned land.
Heritage Resources	
MR37	A condition assessment will be completed biannually by the MBSNF Archaeologist or equivalent specialist, for eligible and potentially eligible historic properties to ensure that preservation objectives are met during implementation of the MDP.
MR38	MBSNF Archaeologist or equivalent specialist shall be on-site when ground disturbing activity is within 80 meters (ca. 265 feet) of site 06-05-05-00064.
MR39	Construction activity, including vegetation removal, revegetation and equipment staging and spoils piles will be excluded within 50 meters of NRHP-eligible or potentially eligible properties. If surface erosion is a concern, hand seeding and mulching may be approved within the property accordance with MR1 after coordination with the MBSNF Archaeologist or equivalent specialist.
MR40	If site 06-05-05-00087 could be disturbed by utility trenching or any other activities, testing and further analysis of the site will take place to determine if it is eligible to the NRHP. If the site is determined eligible and cannot be avoided, the SHPO and the ACHP will be consulted regarding mitigation measures, and a Memorandum of Agreement will be developed to address effects.
MR41	If any previously unidentified heritage resources are identified or encountered, or if an identified heritage resource is affected in an unanticipated way at any time during the implementation of the MDP, work shall be suspended in the area of the find and efforts shall be made to protect the resource until the Forest Archaeologist is notified and the requirements of the USFS pursuant to the Programmatic Agreement or regulations in place at the time are met.
MR42	The Summit-at-Snoqualmie shall notify the Snoqualmie Tribe Cultural Department, or agreed-upon representative, of the implementation and/or construction schedule for all projects approved under the MDP, to allow them to have a Tribal monitor present during the project.

**Table ROD-A-1:
Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions
Included in the Selected Alternative**

Other Management Provisions	
Climate and Snow	
OMP1	For all structures and facilities located within and adjacent to avalanche slide paths, The Summit-at-Snoqualmie will hire qualified avalanche zoning experts to perform site-specific avalanche dynamics studies before the site location and design is finalized.
Geology and Soils	
OMP2	Manage stormwater runoff at construction/grading sites to limit stormwater/soil exposure sediment loss (see FEIS Appendix G – Conceptual Stormwater Management Plan).
OMP3	Replant all disturbed areas as rapidly as possible minimizing the length of time that there are bare soils associated with construction, clearing, and grading (see Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan).
OMP4	Use site specific vegetation maintenance measures to increase success rate of restoration plantings (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan).
OMP5	Maintain all new and existing roads and culverts to prevent erosion and mass wasting associated with culvert and water bar failure (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan). Protect all culvert and waterbar outlets and all culvert inlets from erosion.
OMP6	New road construction would utilize best design practices to minimize erosion and slope failures (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan).
Watershed Resources	
OMP7	In areas where clearing and grading are proposed adjacent to streams or wetlands, additional structural erosion control measures will be implemented as necessary above and beyond SWPPP requirements.
OMP8	Project-specific SWPPPs will specify that supplies and materials needed to complete erosion control measures will be onsite prior to initiating soil-disturbing activities.
OMP9	Crossings will be installed in intermittent channels when the channels are naturally dewatered or after diverting flow around the construction site.
OMP10	Bridge crossings will be installed above the Ordinary High Water Level in the least impactful area (i.e., narrowest spot), and also won't be built in the floodplain so there is minimized erosion impacts to adjacent wetlands and floodplains.
OMP11	Full clearing will be avoided when clearing for ski trails in Riparian Buffers. Partial clearing and flush cutting (instead of stump removal) will be practiced where practical.
OMP12	No LWD will be removed from Riparian Buffers. LWD may be removed from stream channels to protect crossing structures. LWD removed from stream channels will be placed in the adjacent Riparian Buffers.
OMP13	Approved MDP projects in Riparian Buffers will be confined within construction limits designated during project design. Compliance monitoring will be conducted by the USFS and if lack of compliance is found, additional mitigation may be required at USFS discretion.
OMP14	If grading, excavation, or soil movement is to be performed within a stream or wetland, a qualified construction monitor will be onsite to ensure that all applicable BMPs are followed. A field meeting with the construction manager, USFS, and biologist will occur before construction to select required BMPs and discuss any additional methods to minimize impacts.

**Table ROD-A-1:
Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions
Included in the Selected Alternative**

OMP15	No access corridors, staging areas, spoils piles, or other construction-related materials will be sited within native plant communities in Riparian Buffers, except where such communities are due to be removed as part of the project under construction.
OMP16	Wetland impacts will be minimized by maintaining the existing contours and drainage patterns in wetlands that intersect proposed ski trails.
OMP17	The number of vehicle trips across project sites will be limited to the minimum necessary. Existing/proposed roads will be used to convey construction equipment and materials to individual project sites.
OMP18	Existing and future sources of coarse organic debris will be preserved whenever possible to enhance organic matter, nutrients, and surface roughness in soils. Where possible felled trees or snags will be buried near their origin to maintain long-term sources of organic matter, consistent with other mitigation measures. When grading ski trails, coarse organic debris will be collected and stockpiled along with topsoil. Organic debris will be redistributed and stabilized by partial burial when re-dressing the site with topsoil.
OMP19	Trees (including live trees and snags) will be felled within Riparian Buffers only (1) to construct approved MDP projects or (2) to maintain safety. For approved MDP projects, the specific trees to be felled will be designated during the design process and the USFS consulted for approval that the design does minimize tree removal. Where possible, trees will be felled so that the fallen tree may be left in place on the ground. Where possible, trees will be topped rather than felled. If felled trees more than 15cm DBH must be removed from Riparian Reserves then they will be placed elsewhere in the SUP area to enhance terrestrial or aquatic habitat or soil organic matter with Riparian Reserves, unless it is determined that sufficient CWD exists in RRs by the USFS.
OMP20	Plant material and topsoil will be salvaged for use in revegetation in Riparian Reserves.
Fisheries	
OMP21	Oil, fuel, or hydraulic fluid, and sediments are a contamination source for Beaver Lake Creek near Summit West maintenance shop. Develop method(s) to contain oils and sediments to prohibit pollutants entering stream.
OMP22	Stormwater management facilities will be installed per the Stormwater Management Plan (see FEIS Appendix G) in all proposed parking lots and parking lots proposed for paving on National Forest lands.
OMP23	Use BMPs for erosion and sedimentation control on all clearing and grading projects such as silt fencing, mulching, erosion control matting, diversion of surface flow. For examples see: Ecology (2003).
OMP24	Replant cleared and graded areas with native species consistent with proposed uses as quickly as possible after clearing and grading has been completed (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan).
Vegetation	
OMP25	Maintain existing conditions at known sites of special status plant species outside of proposed ski trails.
OMP26	During construction of trails in Section 16 (Summit East – Creek Run and Rampart pods), use selective tree removal during construction and gladed trail clearing to maintain 70% overstory canopy cover where it currently exists.
OMP27	Do not use sensitive plant locations for staging areas or storage areas during construction.
OMP28	Flag known special status plant species locations near construction areas to avoid disturbance.
OMP29	Monitor the wetland where <i>G. douglasiana</i> occurs during construction of the Wildside chairlift to ensure materials, equipment, and work crews do not encroach in the wetland.
OMP30	Construction equipment will utilize existing roads or be lifted to steep slope sites by helicopter.

**Table ROD-A-1:
Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions
Included in the Selected Alternative**

OMP31	Disturbed sites will be revegetated with native plants or USFS approved nonnative grass or forb species (see FEIS Appendix F – Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan). Native/USFS approved nonnative species will also be used to revegetate ground disturbance areas associated with buildings, roads, and ski terminal perimeters.
OMP32	Pinned logs will be used to help stabilize soil for planting sites on road cuts. Decommissioned roadbeds will be revegetated with native grass and forb species or USFS approved erosion control seed mixes.
OMP33	During trenching for utility installation, the upper 6- to 12-inch sod layer will be removed in a separate lift so it can be reapplied on salvaged topsoil. Construction mats and low-pressure tires will be used when driving across wet soils to dig the trench and install utility lines.
OMP34	Trees will be felled away from special-status plant populations. Ground disturbance will be minimized during removal of logs and slash. Understory vegetation will be left in areas that are cleared but not regraded.
OMP35	Large trees will be retained where possible. Small trees and shrub vegetation will be retained along edges of ski trails where possible to create a feathered edge of vegetation. Where possible, trees will be removed over a sufficient snowpack.
OMP36	Where feasible, vegetation disturbance will be minimized by bringing construction materials and equipment to the project site over a sufficient snowpack. Helicopters and existing access roads will be used to minimize disturbance during construction.
OMP37	Construction contractors will be notified of sensitive avoidance areas during pre-construction field meetings. Onsite biological monitors will ensure avoidance areas are being maintained during construction
OMP38	Wetlands and locations of special-status plant species will not be used for construction staging areas. Where feasible, vegetation disturbance will be minimized by bringing construction materials and equipment to the project site during snowpack. Helicopters and existing access roads will be used to minimize disturbance during construction.
Wildlife	
OMP39	To reduce potential impacts to mature forest, avoid clearing buffer areas of parking lots, roads, and buildings within mature forest habitat to the extent feasible and design utility trenching such that overstory trees do not have to be removed.
OMP40	Removal of snags and down woody material will be restricted to that necessary to meet safety standards. Where possible, snags will be topped instead of removed. Large down woody material will be left where felled whenever feasible.
OMP41	To avoid impacts to nesting spotted owls in areas adjacent to the Study Area, all helicopter access and egress routes will be planned such that they avoid passing over known and historic nest sites outside of the SUP area at an altitude of less than 250 feet above the canopy.
OMP42	In areas where additional night lighting is proposed, directional lighting designed to reduce ambient reflection or night glare will be used to reduce potential impacts to nocturnal animals.
OMP43	To minimize potential impacts to nesting birds, including woodpeckers and other primary cavity excavators, olive sided flycatchers, and neotropical migratory birds potentially occurring in the Study Area, habitat disturbing activities associated with construction and maintenance will occur only between the dates of August 1 and March 15 and while snow is present on the ground, unless otherwise agreed to with USFS personnel and based on conditions.
OMP44	Where new culverts are installed or old culverts replaced, bottomless arch culverts or bridges will be used where feasible to maintain habitat connectivity for low-mobility, riparian-dependent species.

**Table ROD-A-1:
Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions
Included in the Selected Alternative**

OMP45	A public education program will be implemented by Ski Lifts, Inc. Resorts in cooperation with the USFS to encourage observation of wildlife and to discourage harassment and feeding of wildlife. Special emphasis will be placed on avoiding disturbance to mountain goats during the kidding season and to elk during the calving season.
OMP46	All food and garbage associated with development and operation of the ski area will be controlled by using bear proof containers.
OMP47	Small slash piles will be left in place for wildlife use.
Air Quality	
OMP48	During construction under dry conditions, water will be applied to work roads and exposed soils to minimize dust and PM ₁₀ emissions. Prompt revegetation including seeding, mulching, straw matting, etc. will be implemented to reduce or eliminate long-term emissions per the Implementation, Operations, Restoration and Monitoring Plan (see FEIS Appendix F).
OMP49	Chipping, lopping, scattering, and light broadcast burning of wood material will be implemented wherever practical. Pile burning will only be used where necessary. Any slash burning will be carried out under USFS guidelines and state permitting procedures, with appropriate fire control measures.
OMP50	Burning permits will be obtained for all burning. Burn piles will be ignited under good-to-excellent ventilation conditions. Operations will be suspended under adverse dispersion conditions, or during weekends from July 1 to Labor Day.
OMP51	Construction will be phased over an extended period (10 years) to minimize air quality impacts occurring at single time.
Heritage Resources	
OMP52	Grading or excavating for lifts and trails will not be allowed within the PCNST corridor. Utility crossings over the PCNST will be restored to pre-construction conditions.
Recreation	
OMP53	Temporary signage will be posted at PCNST trailheads to warn users of construction activities, and if necessary, alternative routes will be provided.
Utilities	
OMP54	Limit the amount of open trench exposed; complete installation as quickly as feasible; compact trench fill to retard potential for erosion; revegetate or provide other means of retarding potential for erosion. If a segment of trench is located in an area where flows may concentrate, install water bars or other means to divert or disperse water away from the trenched site.
Standard Operating Procedures	
OMP55	Construction documents will be prepared and stamped by a professional engineer, as necessary, and approved by the USFS.
OMP56	For each project, a SWPPP will be prepared with a list of site specific mitigation measures (including those from this table and others as deemed appropriate). This plan will be approved by the USFS prior to implementation of any project.
OMP57	Construction will not begin until authorized by the USFS and approved by all applicable Federal, State, and local agencies.
OMP58	In addition to the Implementation, Operation, and Restoration Monitoring Plan, The Summit-at-Snoqualmie will provide routine environmental (and other) monitoring of construction sites to insure that all permit conditions and mitigation measures are met.

**Table ROD-A-1:
Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions
Included in the Selected Alternative**

Transportation	
OMP59	The Summit-at-Snoqualmie will make a good faith effort to increase the use of busses and car pools by increasing preferential car pool parking areas, working with Metro and others to increase bus service on weekends, providing incentives for those that take the bus, and by promoting bus and car pool use through various means (including the ski area website).

FIGURES

The Summit at Snoqualmie

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie/
Okanogan-Wenatchee
National Forests

ROD Figure 1

Vicinity Map



SNOQUALMIE MOUNTAINS
CASCADIA

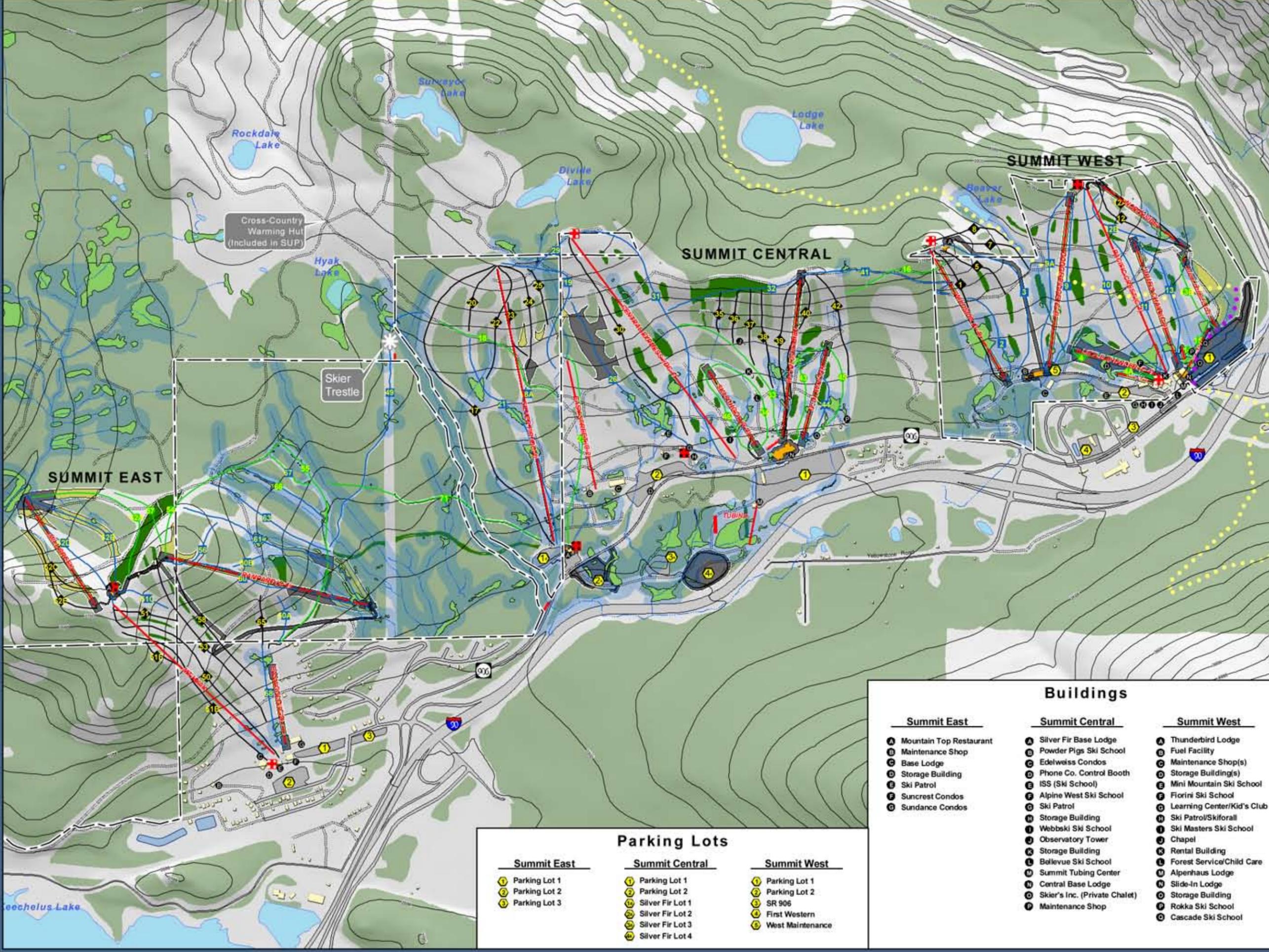
The Summit

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie/
Okanogan-Wenatchee
National Forests

ROD Figure 2
Selected Alternative
Proposed Conditions

LEGEND

- Chair Lift - Existing
- Chair Lift - Proposed
- Chair Lift - Modified
- Ski Trail - Beginner
- Ski Trail - Expert
- Ski Trail - Intermediate
- SUP Boundary - Existing
- SUP Boundary - Proposed
- Ski Patrol - Existing
- Ski Patrol - Proposed
- Building - Existing
- Building - Proposed
- Parking Lot - Existing
- Parking Lot - Proposed
- Pacific Crest Trail
- Pacific Crest Trail - Reroute
- Retention Pond
- Streams & Riparian Buffers
- Lake/Pond
- Wetland
- Paved Road
- Grading
- Clearing
- Revegetation



Buildings

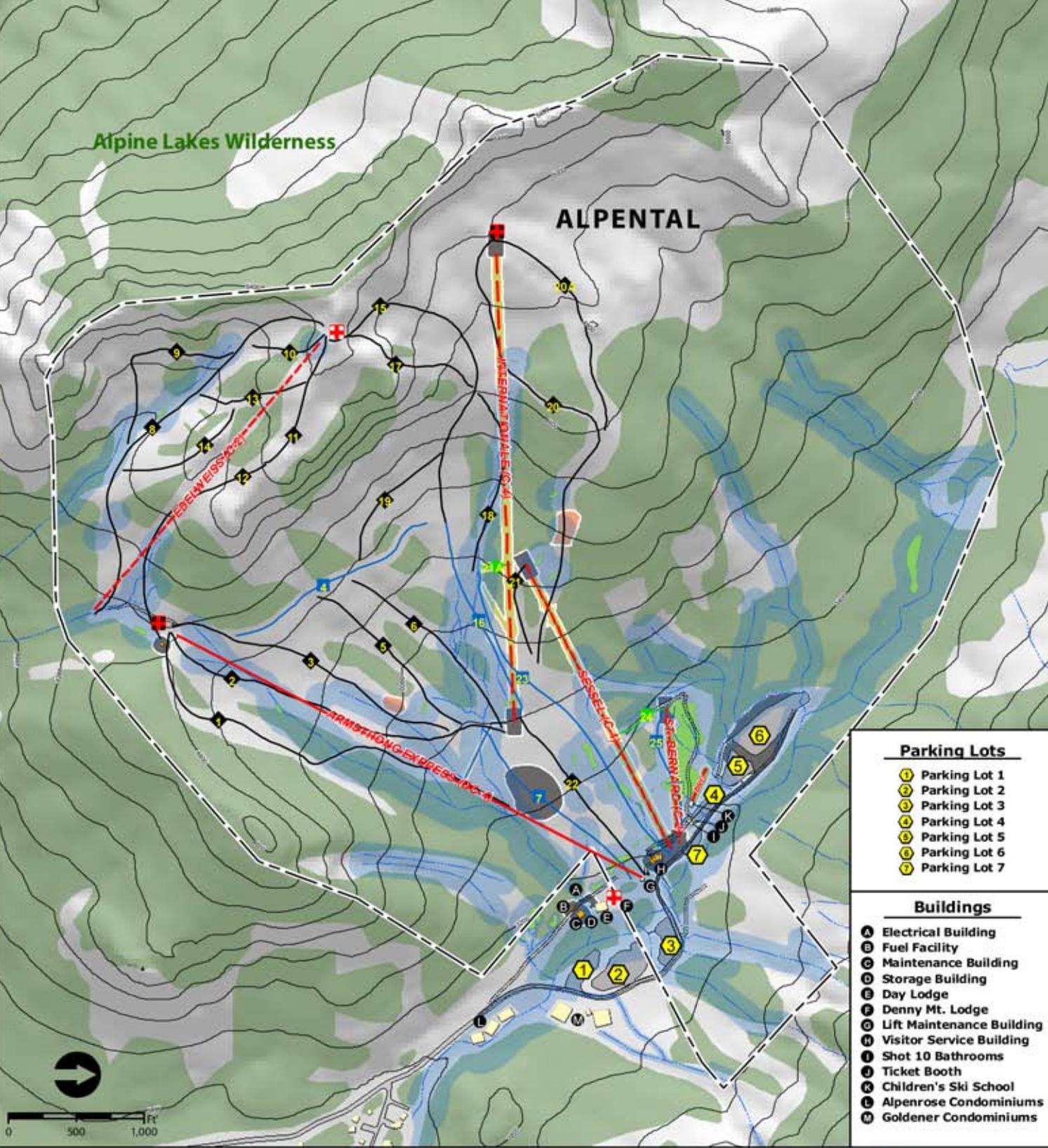
- | Summit East | Summit Central | Summit West |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| A Mountain Top Restaurant | A Silver Fir Base Lodge | A Thunderbird Lodge |
| B Maintenance Shop | B Powder Pigs Ski School | B Fuel Facility |
| C Base Lodge | C Edelweiss Condos | C Maintenance Shop(s) |
| D Storage Building | D Phone Co. Control Booth | D Storage Building(s) |
| E Ski Patrol | E ISS (Ski School) | E Mini Mountain Ski School |
| F Suncrest Condos | F Alpine West Ski School | F Fiorini Ski School |
| G Sundance Condos | G Ski Patrol | G Learning Center/Kid's Club |
| | H Storage Building | H Ski Patrol/Skiforall |
| | I Webbski Ski School | I Ski Masters Ski School |
| | J Observatory Tower | J Chapel |
| | K Storage Building | K Rental Building |
| | L Bellevue Ski School | L Forest Service/Child Care |
| | M Summit Tubing Center | M Alpenhaus Lodge |
| | N Central Base Lodge | N Slide-In Lodge |
| | O Skier's Inc. (Private Chalet) | O Storage Building |
| | P Maintenance Shop | P Rokka Ski School |
| | | Q Cascade Ski School |

Parking Lots

- | Summit East | Summit Central | Summit West |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Parking Lot 1 | 1 Parking Lot 1 | 1 Parking Lot 1 |
| 2 Parking Lot 2 | 2 Parking Lot 2 | 2 Parking Lot 2 |
| 3 Parking Lot 3 | 1A Silver Fir Lot 1 | 3 SR 906 |
| | 2A Silver Fir Lot 2 | 4 First Western |
| | 3A Silver Fir Lot 3 | 5 West Maintenance |
| | 4A Silver Fir Lot 4 | |

Alpine Lakes Wilderness

ALPENTAL

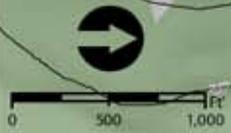


Parking Lots

- ① Parking Lot 1
- ② Parking Lot 2
- ③ Parking Lot 3
- ④ Parking Lot 4
- ⑤ Parking Lot 5
- ⑥ Parking Lot 6
- ⑦ Parking Lot 7

Buildings

- A Electrical Building
- B Fuel Facility
- C Maintenance Building
- D Storage Building
- E Day Lodge
- F Denny Mt. Lodge
- G Lift Maintenance Building
- H Visitor Service Building
- I Shot 10 Bathrooms
- J Ticket Booth
- K Children's Ski School
- L Alpenrose Condominiums
- M Goldener Condominiums



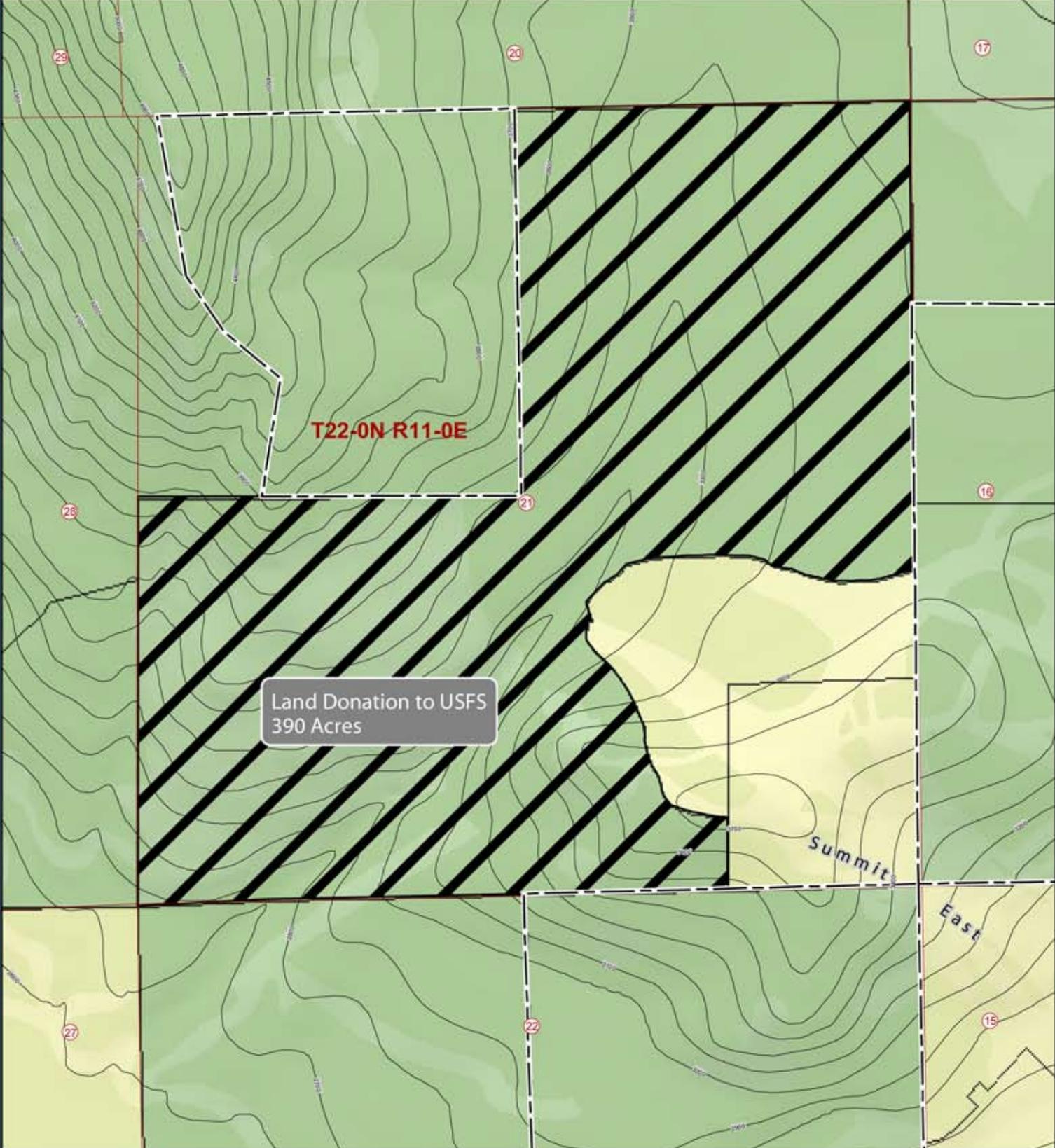
Alpentel
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie/
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Figure 3
Selected Alternative
Proposed Conditions

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|------------|
| | Chair Lift - Existing | | Ski Patrol - Existing | | Blasting |
| | Chair Lift - Proposed | | Ski Patrol - Proposed | | Grading |
| | Chair Lift - Modified | | Building - Existing | | Clearing |
| | Ski Trail - Beginner | | Building - Proposed | | |
| | Ski Trail - Expert | | Parking Lot - Existing | | Paved Road |
| | Ski Trail - Intermediate | | Streams & Riparian Buffers | | Wetland |
| | SUP Boundary - Existing | | Wilderness Boundary | | |

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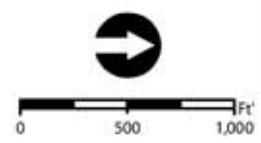
The Summit

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National Forests

Figure 4
Approved Land
Acquisition

-  SUP Boundary - Existing
-  Section Boundary
T22-NR11-E
-  Donation from Ski Lifts Inc.
to Forest Service

- Existing Ownership**
-  Private Lands
 -  USFS Lands



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The Summit

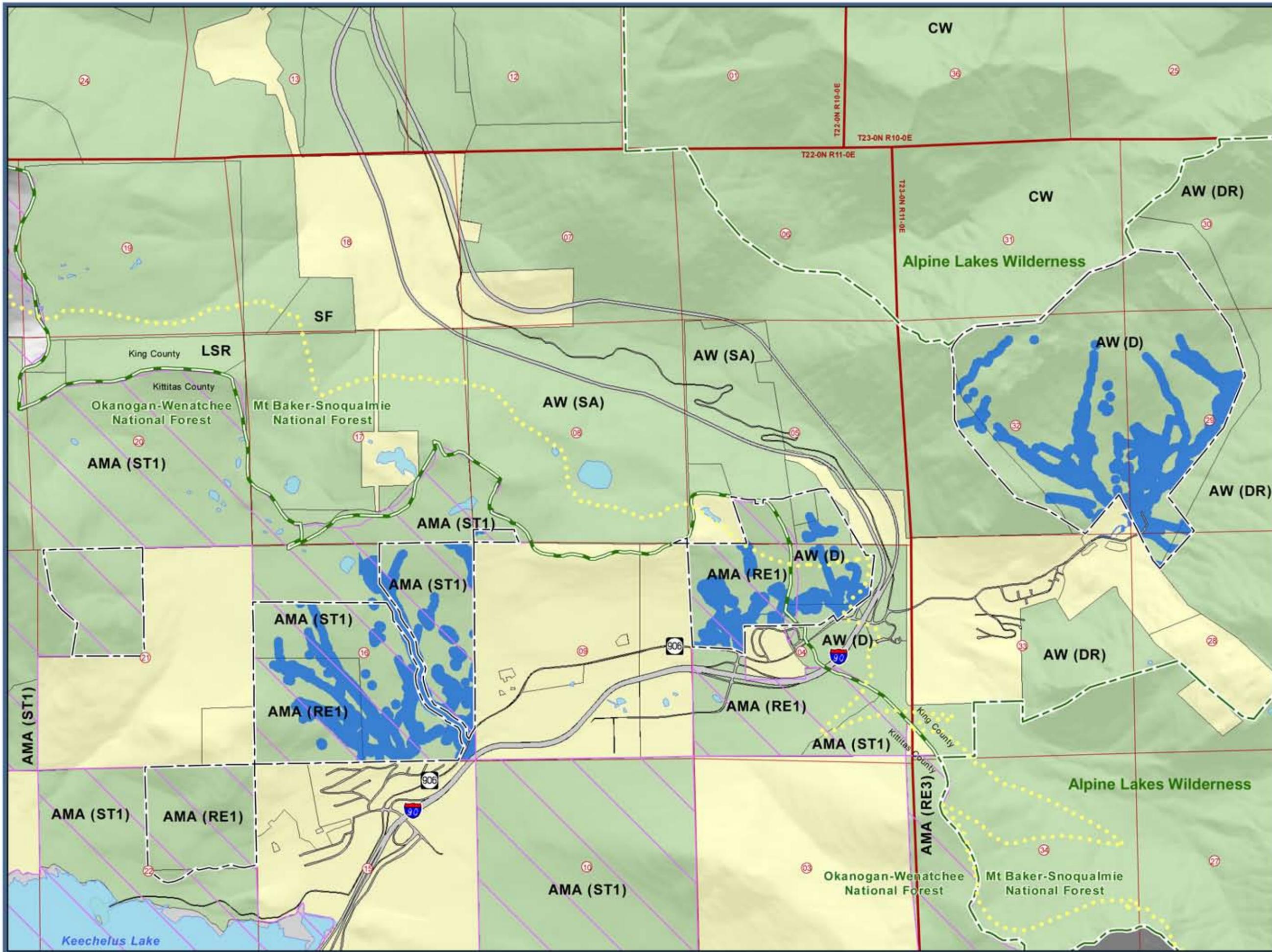
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie/
Okanogan-Wenatchee
National Forests

ROD Figure 5

Existing NFSL
Allocation

LEGEND

-  Section Boundary
-  Township/Range Boundary
-  Forest/County Boundary
-  SUP Boundary - Existing
-  Wilderness Boundary
-  SPAMA Boundary
-  Riparian Reserve
-  Pacific Crest Trail
-  Lake/Pond
-  Paved Road
- Natl' Forest System Lands Ownership**
-  USFS Ownership
-  Private Ownership



The Summit

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie/
Okanogan-Wenatchee
National Forests

ROD Figure 6
Existing Private Lands
and Zoning

LEGEND

- Section Boundary
 - Township/Range Boundary
 - SUP Boundary - Existing
 - Forest/County Boundary
 - Parcels
 - Pacific Crest Trail
 - Lake/Pond
 - Paved Road
- King County Zoning**
- CB - Commercial Business
 - F - Forested
 - R-18 - Residential 18DU
 - R-4 - Residential 4DU
- Kittitas County Zoning**
- C - Commercial
 - C-F - Commercial Forest
 - F-R - Forest & Range
 - PUD - Planned Unit Development

