ELDORA

ELDORA MOUNTAIN RESORT

SKI AREA PROJECTS

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

DRAFT RECORD OF DECISION

MARCH 2015

USDA FOREST SERVICE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION
ROOSEVELT NATIONAL FOREST

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION (R2)

ROOSEVELT NATIONAL FOREST

BOULDER RANGER DISTRICT

BOULDER AND GILPIN COUNTIES, COLORADO

Lead Agency: USDA Forest Service

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DRAFT RECORD OF DECISION

INTRODUCTION

This draft Record of Decision (draft ROD) documents my intended decision to approve selected projects at Eldora Mountain Resort (EMR). EMR is located on the Roosevelt National Forest managed by the administrative unit, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) in Boulder and Gilpin counties, Colorado. My decision is based on, and supported by, the Eldora Mountain Resort Ski Area Projects Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the administrative record.

BACKGROUND

EMR operates under a Special Use Permit (SUP) from the Forest Service. The terms of the SUP require the preparation of a Master Plan, which identifies goals and opportunities for future management of the ski area on National Forest System (NFS) lands. A Master Plan was prepared and submitted by EMR and approved through a Forest Service Decision Notice in 1994. In subsequent years, the 1994 Master Plan was revised and culminated in the 2011 Eldora Mountain Resort Master Plan (2011 Master Plan).[1] The 2011 Master Plan includes a list of proposed projects that, if analyzed and approved through an environmental analysis and decision process, generally could be implemented in five to ten years. Major components of the 2011 Master Plan include improvements to chairlift infrastructure, additional terrain serviced by new chairlifts (Jolly Jug, Placer Express, and Moose Glades), and the construction of a new on-mountain guest service facility. Currently EMR includes skiing on approximately 336 acres of ski trails and tree and gladed skiing areas. Also included in the 2011 Master Plan is a suite of chairlift upgrades, improvements to guest service facilities and parking areas, and several terrain network improvements within the ski area boundary.

LOCATION

EMR is located partially on private land and partially on National Forest System (NFS) lands administered by the ARP, in Boulder and Gilpin Counties, Colorado. The ski area is located outside of Nederland, approximately 21 miles west of Boulder, and 47 miles northwest of Denver, along Colorado's Front Range (refer to the Vicinity Map). EMR is accessed via a 3-mile side road off of State Highway 119. The ski area occupies approximately 1,204 acres of land: 524 acres of NFS lands; 220 acres are privately owned by EMR; and 460 acres are private lands leased by EMR. Elevations range from 9,200 feet elevation at the base of the ski slopes to 10,800 feet at the summit.

[1] Ski area Master Plans are conceptual in nature and contain desired conditions, objectives, and rationale for the comprehensive development of NFS lands within the SUP boundary *and* adjacent private lands. Master Plans are *accepted* by the Forest Service and provide a *framework* for identifying and prioritizing potential projects to be subsequently carried forward into a NEPA review and analysis.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The ARP has prepared an EIS in response to EMR's request to implement projects from their accepted 2011 Master Plan. The overall purpose of the proposed projects is to improve the guest experience and skier safety as well as address forest health and vegetation management at the resort.

Purpose and Need

In order to meet the needs and expectations of existing and potential guests and provide a safe skiing experience, the ARP, through its acceptance of EMR's 2011 Master Plan, has identified a need to:

- Improve the reliability of chairlift and terrain offerings
- Address skier safety concerns during prevalent wind events
- Provide additional intermediate to expert ability level terrain and a new, more natural terrain experience
- Provide new and upgraded chairlift infrastructure to improve the quality of the alpine ski experience
- Expand and improve on-mountain guest services
- Maintain vegetation to improve forest health within the EMR boundaries in a manner that continues to be compatible with historic and future ski area uses
- Reduce the spread of noxious weeds

Refer to Chapter 1 of the FEIS for the Purpose and Need description in its entirety.

THE DECISION AND RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION

After thoroughly considering the project Purpose and Need, issues, alternatives and extensive analyses presented in the Eldora Mountain Resort Ski Area Projects EIS, as well as the public and agency comments submitted, my decision is to approve components from both Alternative 2 and Alternative 3. My decision approves the following (as depicted on figures ROD-1, 2, and 3):

- The Placer Express chairlift and its associated terrain included in Alternative 2
- The Jolly Jug chairlift and its associated terrain included in Alternative 3
- The Corona chairlift and terrain elements from Alternative 2
- The Challenge chairlift upgrade in Alternatives 2 and 3
- Snowmaking coverage for approved ski trails identified in Alternatives 2 and 3
- On-mountain guest service facilities in Alternatives 2 and 3
- Vegetation management projects identified in Alternatives 2 and 3

My decision includes amendments to the 1997 Revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (Forest Plan). My decision necessitates the expansion of EMR's permit boundary on both the north and the south. All NFS lands within EMR's SUP boundary will be amended to Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts. Through this Forest Plan amendment process the Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classification will also be amended to correspond with Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts.

In addition, my decision approves the amendment to Forest Plan Standard 99 by removing the applicability of this standard specifically to the component of the decision at the Middle Boulder Creek area on the proposed northern SUP boundary. Additional information regarding the Forest Plan amendments can be found in Appendix B of the FEIS.

My decision also amends the 2011 Master Plan to include the Alternative 3 configuration of the Jolly Jug chairlift and terrain. All other elements of my decision are consistent with the 2011 Master Plan.

My decision includes the addition of approximately 66 acres of ski trails, the creation of approximately 77 acres of tree and gladed skiing areas and modifications to approximately 42 acres of existing tree and gladed skiing across six areas. My decision approves projects located only on NFS lands.

Terrain

My decision includes terrain expansions in both the Placer pod and Jolly Jug pod.

Table ROD-1:
Proposed Terrain Area by Ability Level – Selected Alternative

Skier/Rider Ability Level	Ski Trails	Tree and Gladed Skiing Areas[a]	Total
	(acres)	(acres)	(acres)
Beginner	0	0	0
Novice	0	0	0
Low Intermediate	0	0	0
Intermediate	50	35	85
Advanced Intermediate	11	21	32
Expert	5	63	68
Total	**66**	**119**	**185**

[a] Tree and Gladed Skiing Areas accounts for existing areas to be modified and new areas to be created

Jolly Jug Terrain

The Jolly Jug terrain (as detailed in Alternative 3 of the FEIS) includes the construction of five new ski trails (labeled as *JJ-1* through *JJ-5* on Figure ROD-1), amounting to approximately 27 acres of terrain, and the development of approximately 35 acres of tree and gladed skiing areas (labeled as *Jolly Jug Glades* and Jolly Jug Glades *II* on Figure ROD-1). The proposal for the Jolly Jug terrain will add approximately 62 acres of intermediate terrain. This project component will require an adjustment to the SUP of approximately 18 acres. A portion of the Jolly Jug terrain will be located on private land. EMR will re-negotiate a lease agreement with the landowner.

Placer Terrain

The Placer terrain (as detailed in Alternative 2 of the FEIS) includes the construction of six new ski trails (labeled as *P-1* through *P-6* on Figure ROD-1), amounting to approximately 22 acres, and the development of approximately 16 acres of tree and gladed skiing areas (labeled *Placer Glades II* on Figure ROD-1). The addition of the Placer terrain will add approximately 15 acres of intermediate terrain, 7 acres of advanced intermediate terrain, and 16 acres of expert terrain. This project component will require an adjustment to the SUP boundary of approximately 70 acres (refer to the Forest Plan Amendment heading below for additional information).

Corona Terrain

The Corona terrain (as detailed in Alternative 2 of the FEIS) includes the construction of four new ski trails (labeled as *C-1* through *C-4* on Figure ROD-1), amounting to approximately 17 acres. Additionally, approximately 68 acres of tree and gladed skiing areas (labeled as Salto Glades, Bryan Glades, Bryan Glades II, and Placer Glades on Figure ROD-1) will be developed or modified. This terrain will be accessed primarily from the Corona chairlift. *Lower Diamondback* and *Lower Ambush* trails will also be widened approximately 30 feet on each side, amounting to approximately 2 acres.[2] The proposal for the Corona terrain will add approximately 8 acres of intermediate terrain, 25 acres of advanced intermediate terrain, and 52 acres of expert terrain.

Chairlifts

My decision authorizes the construction of two new chairlifts and two chairlift replacements.

Jolly Jug Chairlift

The new Jolly Jug chairlift component (as detailed in Alternative 3 of the FEIS) of my decision is a detachable four- or six-person chairlift. The chairlift will have a slope length of approximately 4,350 feet, a vertical rise of approximately 1,000 feet and a design capacity of 1,200 pph. The Jolly Jug chairlift will

[2] The ARP recognizes that these ski trails are closer in proximity to Indian Peaks and the proposed Placer Express chairlift, but for organization of action alternatives, this project component is grouped with the Corona chairlift and terrain.

ascend from a lower terminal near the existing "Deadman's Gulch" Nordic Trail at 9,350 elevation (located on private land) to an upper terminal located to the south of the *Pipeline* trail at 10,350 feet. Ground disturbance (grading) will be required for the installation of the top and bottom terminals. The chairlift terminal structures will be colored to match the surrounding landscape and will utilize either a very low reflectivity or coated glass.

Power will be connected to the top and bottom terminals. A buried power line will extend from the top of the existing Challenge chairlift to the proposed Jolly Jug chairlift top terminal within a proposed access road. Power to the bottom terminal will be buried in the existing access road. The power lines will avoid streams and wetlands.

Placer Express Chairlift

The new Placer Express (as detailed in Alternative 2 of the FEIS) will be a detachable six-person chairlift. The chairlift will have a slope length of approximately 3,250 feet, a vertical rise of approximately 950 feet and a design capacity of 2,400 pph. The Placer Express chairlift bottom terminal will be located near Middle Boulder Creek and the alignment will parallel a portion of the Indian Peaks chairlift. Ground disturbance (grading) will be required for the installation of the top and bottom terminals. The chairlift terminal structures will be colored to match the surrounding landscape and will utilize either a very low reflectivity or coated glass. The location of the chairlift responds to wind concerns; the alignment and top and bottom terminals are located in areas less susceptible to wind events. This location will allow the chairlift to operate when other chairlifts at EMR could be closed due to wind events.

Power will be connected to the top and bottom terminals. The power line will extend from the top of the existing Challenge chairlift down existing and proposed ski trails. The power lines will be buried and will avoid streams and wetlands.[3]

To facilitate construction, on-going maintenance and emergency access, a bridge crossing Middle Boulder Creek and two road segments will be constructed to connect CR 130 (north of Middle Boulder Creek) to the proposed Placer Express bottom terminal site. The bridge will be gated year-round and restricted to administrative use.

Corona Chairlift

The existing four-person, fixed-grip Corona chairlift will be replaced with a new six-person, detachable chairlift (as detailed in Alternatives 2 and 3 of the FEIS). The existing chairlift will be removed and upgraded with the new chairlift in the same alignment with the same top and bottom terminal location. The upgraded Corona chairlift will have a design capacity of 2,400 pph. Ground disturbance (grading) will be required for the installation of a larger bottom terminal, including raising the height of the existing

[3] The analysis and disturbance calculations account for utility installation. Mapping and shapefiles are available in the project file.

retaining wall located below the bottom terminal. The top and bottom chairlift terminal structures will be colored to match the surrounding landscape and will utilize either a very low reflectivity or coated glass.

Power is currently provided to the top chairlift terminal location. Power will be buried to the bottom chairlift terminal location via the Corona road, extending from the proposed power line for the Placer Express chairlift.

Challenge Chairlift

The existing Challenge and Cannonball chairlifts will be removed and replaced with one six-person, detachable chairlift in an alignment that provides direct out-of-base access to the summit of Challenge Mountain (as detailed in Alternatives 2 and 3 of the FEIS). The chairlift will have a slope length of approximately 4,100 feet, a vertical rise of approximately 1,000 feet and a design capacity of 3,000 pph. Ground disturbance (grading) will be required for the installation of larger top and bottom terminals. The bottom terminal of the new Challenge chairlift will be located on private lands within the existing ski area parking lot. The new chairlift will follow a slightly different alignment from the existing Challenge and Cannonball chairlifts. The top terminal on NFS lands will be built with an enclosed structure that surrounds the terminal. This will protect the chairlift unload from the wind. The top terminal chairlift structure will be designed with an architectural theme that will be consistent with the Built Environment Image Guide.

Snowmaking

Snowmaking coverage is proposed for all new ski trails (a combination of Alternatives 2 and 3 of the FEIS), excluding tree and gladed skiing areas. This will result in approximately 65 acres of additional snowmaking coverage.

On-Mountain Facilities

To improve the guest experience at EMR, a new food and beverage facility will be constructed below the top terminal of the Indian Peaks chairlift (as detailed in Alternatives 2 and 3 of the FEIS). The new Challenge Mountain Facility will be approximately 16,000 to 20,000 square feet and provide 850 seats for guests. In addition to the new food and beverage facility, EMR will also renovate the existing 3,000-square foot Lookout facility, increasing its size to between 7,700 and 9,700 square feet, providing up to 300 more seats for guests. The existing snowmaking system will continue to deliver potable drinking water to the Lookout and will begin delivering potable drinking water to the Challenge Mountain facility. On-site septic systems will accommodate sewage disposal for the proposed Lookout facility and Challenge Mountain Facility.[4] Both facilities will treat and dispose wastewater through a septic tank-leach field sewage disposal system.

[4] The current septic system at the Lookout facility would be expanded to accommodate additional use.

Both facilities will be designed to meet the Built Environment Image Guide and design elements will be derived from the existing Indian Peaks Lodge to maintain a consistent architectural theme for the ski area into the future.

Parking

In order to accommodate an increase in resort visitation due to proposed projects, additional 560 parking spaces will be provided on private lands (approximately 3.5 acres). This project is not subject to my authorization, but is analyzed in the FEIS as a connected action (as detailed in Alternatives 2 and 3 of the FEIS).

Vegetation Management Projects

EMR has prepared a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) in accordance with the SUP. My decision approves management prescriptions and locations as identified in Figure ROD-2 (a combination of Alternatives 2 and 3 of the FEIS). Management prescriptions have been developed for the ski area to maintain and/or improve forest health within the SUP and adjacent private lands (refer to prescription information below). The prescriptions primarily reflect ski area activities and in most instances include implementation guidance for ski area projects.

EMR will continue the previously authorized (2007) application of carbaryl to selected stands in order to prevent the spread of Mountain Pine Beetle. In addition, a Weed Management Plan is a component of the VMP and measures are incorporated as project design criteria into my decision.

P1 New Ski Trail Construction

This prescription will guide the construction of formal ski trails and lift alignments, totaling approximately 67 acres. All new ski trails with no grading, individual tree removal, and chairlift corridors will be constructed by "flush cutting" removed trees. With this method, stumps will be cut to a height of 4 inches or less from the ground surface; the process may also include stump grinding. This trail preparation method minimizes the need to disturb the remaining stumps and/or surrounding soils, thereby reducing overall ground disturbance and existing vegetation. Prior to vegetation removal, clearing limits will be established.

P2 Existing Ski Trail Maintenance

This prescription will apply to approximately 184 acres of existing ski trails and lift alignments. The new trails will be considered existing trails directly after construction of the trail is completed. If mowing occurs for ski trail maintenance the apparatus should be set to a minimum height of 12 inches above the ground to maintain ground cover.

P3 Defensible Space

This prescription ensures that the maintenance of vegetation provides defensible space from wildland fire and hazard trees around existing and proposed ski area facilities. This prescription will apply to approximately 12 acres surrounding the Lookout Facility, the proposed Challenge Mountain Facility, and the base area facilities. EMR will implement defensible space around all structures in forested areas utilizing Colorado State Forest Service Defensible Space Guidelines (http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/defensible-space/.html). Other preventive measures could include outdoor sprinkler systems to protect the exterior of the structures (e.g., on-mountain restaurants). Defensible space and fuel break treatments will occur around water, power and transmission infrastructure. Fuel breaks should meet the standards listed in the Colorado State Forest Service link (http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/defensible-space/subdivisions.html). EMR will remove and dispose of dead and hazard trees up to 150 percent of the height of the tallest locally hazardous tree from the edge of infrastructure, including: roads, ski trails, recreation trails and facilities. Trees should be felled in the forest and away from infrastructure, limbed, and scattered on the forest floor. Fencing may be necessary to manage and maintain skier/public use in these areas.

P4 New Tree and Gladed Skiing Area Construction

This prescription applies to new tree and gladed skiing areas of my decision. Within these areas, the ground surface will not be graded and the natural ground cover will be maintained. This prescription will apply to approximately 118 acres of terrain.

P5 Existing Tree and Gladed Skiing Areas Maintenance

This prescription will remove dead, dying or diseased trees that have the potential to create a hazard to ski area guests in existing tree and gladed skiing areas across approximately 100 acres. More specifically, EMR will cut and remove all dead or beetle (e.g., MPB, Western Balsam Bark Beetle) infested trees, or trees that are in danger of structural failure from some other means. This prescription will manage insects, disease and damage within these areas.

P6 Sanitation/Salvage with Removal in Lodgepole Pine Stands

This prescription will remove all dead, dying or infested lodgepole pine 4 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) and larger. Live conifers within the treated area will also be removed to avoid windthrow potential and reduce potential fuel loadings. This treatment reduces fuel loading and accelerates regeneration of other species and increases age class diversity. This prescription will apply to approximately 82 acres of lodgepole pine stands.

P7 Sanitation/Salvage with Removal in Spruce/Fir Stands

This prescription will remove all dead, dying and infested Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir primarily located outside the ski trail network that have been affected by insect activity, disease or mechanical damage. EMR will harvest all dead or beetle (e.g., MPB, Western Balsam Bark Beetle) infested trees as

individuals or in groups up to 2 acres in size, or trees that are in danger of structural failure from some other means. The location of dead and dying trees will determine the location and amount of trees that will be removed. Some areas of the stand containing a higher level of beetle infestation may require that the trees be removed in clumps and small groups, while other areas may not require any tree removal. Logs from live spruce trees not removed from the site, which are greater than 4 feet in length should be bucked to lengths less than 2 feet and placed in direct sunlight. This will reduce any potential spruce beetle population buildup in logging debris which can be excellent breeding habitat for spruce beetles. Alternatively this material can be chipped or burned. Additionally, EMR will retain any healthy subalpine fir or Engelmann spruce trees that are not considered hazard trees even with the increased potential for windthrow. This prescription will apply to approximately 14 acres of spruce-fir stands.

P8 Continued Forest Monitoring

This prescription provides for the long-term assessment of forest health at EMR. Healthy stands may develop insect, disease, or damage issues in the future. This prescription provides guidance for future management should concerns arise. This prescription will apply to approximately 200 acres.

Construction Practices

As depicted on Figure ROD-1, additional road spurs (a combination of Alternatives 2 and 3 of the FEIS) will be constructed and maintained for the following proposed chairlifts and facilities: Placer Express chairlift, Jolly Jug chairlift, and Challenge Mountain Facility. As mentioned above, construction of the bottom terminal of the Placer Express chairlift will necessitate the construction of an access road and bridge across Middle Boulder Creek. The road spur to access the Placer Express chairlift will be approximately 256 feet long (116 feet on the north side of Middle Boulder Creek and 140 feet on the south side of Middle Boulder Creek).

A road spur approximately 594 feet in length will be built to access the top terminal of the Placer Express chairlift. This road spur will also serve as a skier access trail during the ski season. The bottom terminal of the Jolly Jug chairlift will be accessed by an existing road, and a road spur of approximately 246 feet will be constructed to reach the top terminal. The Challenge Mountain Facility will be reached by a road spur approximately 1,162 feet in length (this road will be built entirely on existing ski trails).

For the construction of chairlift terminals, equipment will be confined to existing and proposed roads and designated staging areas that will avoid identified sensitive resources. The proposed chairlift towers will be transported to the site by helicopter. Tower foundations will be poured concrete.

Ski trails will be constructed by flush cutting and/or stump grinding, except areas designated for full grading activities. Skidders will be used on proposed ski trails to remove trees and all temporary ground disturbance related to this activity will be restored. Areas proposed for tree and gladed skiing will be cut

by chainsaw and, where appropriate, cut trees will be removed by hand or machinery, depending on the slope of the terrain and presence of any identified sensitive resources.

Building materials for the on-mountain facilities will be transported to the site via existing and proposed roads.

Forest Plan Amendments

Forest Plan Amendments are included in my decision.

Management Area Designation: A Forest Plan Amendment will assign and change Forest Plan management area allocations for areas within the expanded EMR SUP boundary to Management Area 8.22 –Ski-Based Resorts.

Currently, the Forest Plan does not include an official management area allocation for several areas within the existing SUP boundary and the area associated with the Middle Boulder Creek SUP boundary adjustment on the northern side of the project area (refer to FEIS Figure 11 Existing Conditions and Figure ROD-3). Additionally, a portion of the Middle Boulder Creek SUP boundary adjustment area on the northern side of the project area is currently allocated as Management Area 7.1 – Residential-National Forest Intermix and Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts (refer to FEIS Figure 11 Existing Conditions and Figure ROD-3). The SUP boundary adjustment areas on the southern side of the project area are currently allocated as Management Area 1.3 Backcountry Recreation, Management Area 4.3 – Dispersed Recreation and Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts (refer to FEIS Figure 11 Existing Conditions and Figure ROD-3). My decision amends the Forest Plan to assign Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts to the currently unallocated areas within the existing SUP boundary and the Middle Boulder Creek SUP boundary adjustment area on the northern side of the project area. Additionally, my decision changes the current Forest Plan management area associated with boundary adjustments on the southern side of the project area to Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts. The expanded boundary is hereby authorized through an amendment to the Forest Plan and managed to comply with the Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts allocation. EMR's permit will be amended.

Scenic Integrity Objectives and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum: The SIO and the ROS classification will be amended to correspond with Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts. NFS lands within Management Area 8.22 will have a SIO of *Low* and a ROS classification of *Rural.*

Forest Plan Standard 99: My decision includes a Forest Plan Amendment that removes the applicability of Forest Plan Standard 99 specifically to the component of the decision at the Middle Boulder Creek area. In conjunction with the preparation of the FEIS, the Forest Service prepared a Forest Plan Consistency Analysis (FPCA) for each of the standards and guidelines prescribed in the Forest Plan.[5] In

[5] The FPCA is located in the project file.

the preparation of the FPCA, the applicability and relevance of each standard/guideline to the project was assessed.

Standard 99 states:

> *In riparian areas, cover that provides wildlife travel corridors will be maintained along the entire length of riparian zones on at least one side of the drainage. New corridor interruptions affecting both sides of the drainage will be of minimum width needed and no more than 60 feet.*

The Forest Plan will be amended to preclude the applicability of Standard 99 to the Middle Boulder Creek riparian area. Furthermore, this Forest Plan Amendment is a one-time amendment that applies only to my decision in the Middle Boulder Creek riparian area and not in the rest of the EMR's SUP. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis processes for any future ski area project developments within Management Area 8.22 (EMR or other developed winter sports permittees) will evaluate compliance with Forest Plan direction (including Standard 99) on a project-specific basis.

Required Project Design Criteria

Operational and management requirements were developed and will be required in conjunction with implementation of my decision. Additional project design criteria (PDC) were developed and identified in Chapter 2 of the FEIS in response to specific resource issues raised by the public, and are shown in Appendix A of this decision. Of note, additional PDCs were developed for the Middle Boulder Creek area of my decision.

DECISION RATIONALE

As described above, the decision contains all projects described in Alternative 2 of the FEIS (pp. 2-3 through 2-11, and Figure 2), but includes the larger version of the Jolly Jug pod as described in Alternative 3 of the FEIS (pp. 2-12 and 2-13, and Figure 4). My decision to approve a combination of Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 provides EMR with the authorization to implement key components of the 2011 Master Plan. My decision will allow EMR to enhance guest expectations and address the project Purpose and Need, while minimizing impacts on NFS lands. My decision takes into account the impact analyses for all resources considered in the FEIS. The following rationale highlights the areas of key importance that have been identified through this environmental review process.

I recognize that the Placer Express chairlift and terrain project has been a point of contention with members of the community due to the potential environmental and social impacts it may cause (refer to Appendix D of the FEIS for comments raised on the DEIS). I have thoroughly weighed both the projected beneficial and adverse environmental impacts and evaluated the public benefits provided on the National Forest. Alternative configurations were considered for the Placer Express chairlift, however, these various alignments created other resource issues due to extensive grading, additional vegetation removal and

other ground disturbance (FEIS p. 2-40). As the Forest Supervisor managing approximately 2 million acres, I consider how projects affect the ARP as a whole, while understanding there are localized impacts resulting from site-specific decisions. This project decision is an example of this situation. Impacts disclosed in the FEIS are localized. However, I firmly believe these impacts are nominal in the context of the entire ARP and even at the spatially smaller county level. Furthermore, EMR maintains a vital role on the ARP as a highly valued recreation resource for the Front Range communities. With the application of the PDCs (identified in Appendix A of this document), I think the Placer Express chairlift and its associated trails impacts can be managed and minimized, and visitors of the ARP will benefit both now and in the future from my decision.

The Alternative 3 Jolly Jug project adds approximately 62 acres of intermediate terrain, compared to approximately 35 acres in the Alternative 2 version. While the Alternative 3 Jolly Jug terrain will provide 27 additional acres of intermediate terrain (compared with the Alternative 2 version), the impacts of either alternative on NFS lands are nearly the same. The SUP adjustment for the Alternative 3 version of the Jolly Jug terrain is only 2 acres larger than the adjustment for the Alternative 2 version, and both Alternatives include roughly the same trail and glade projects on NFS lands in this area. The Alternative 3 version will have larger impacts because the projects extend further to the south; however, these impacts will occur on private lands in an area with limited resource value (i.e., the EIS did not identify sensitive resources such as wetlands or high quality wildlife habitat in this area). Therefore while I acknowledge that the Alternative 3 version of Jolly Jug will have greater impacts, I have included it in my decision because: 1) the benefits to the recreation experience will be substantial, 2) the impacts on NFS lands are nearly the same between the two configurations, and 3) the private lands that will be minimally impacted.

Overall, I think the projects authorized in my decision will significantly improve the recreational experience at EMR. As the nearest ski resort to the northern metropolitan areas along the Front Range, there is great potential for EMR to continue to be a truly great recreational resource on the ARP serving a large population. The upgrades and expansions included in my decision will provide additional terrain, improve the reliability and safety of operations (particularly during wind events), and generally modernize the resort's infrastructure to provide an improved recreation experience. I believe that skiers from Front Range communities will measurably benefit from these projects.

While I do believe that the benefits of these projects will be substantial, I also acknowledge the associated impacts to NFS lands. My decision is supported by the thorough analysis contained in the FEIS. The FEIS discloses, using the best available science and information, the qualitative and quantitative effects on the human and biological environment that are anticipated to result with the implementation of the approved projects (FEIS, Chapter 3). In reviewing the effects in the FEIS, I find they have been adequately addressed and disclosed throughout the analysis. I considered all the resource issues and concerns described in the FEIS, and my rationale for approving these projects is based on careful consideration of several key elements addressed during the public involvement and analysis process, including:

consistency with the project Purpose and Need; consistency with the Forest Plan; and environmental and social impacts.

Consistency with the Project Purpose and Need

I am approving this project as described above (pp. ROD-3 through ROD-12) because it meets the Purpose and Need statement in the FEIS and best addresses the current deficiencies and constraints at EMR. I believe that these projects will improve the variety of terrain offerings, improve the reliability of chairlift infrastructure, and provide upgraded on-mountain guest services. My decision will add a total of 185 acres of terrain in intermediate, advanced intermediate and expert ability levels. Of this new terrain, approximately 119 acres will be in tree and gladed skiing areas, which will provide a more natural terrain experience. Additionally, the new and replaced chairlifts will improve access to the terrain across EMR. The existing chairlifts at EMR are old, uncomfortable, slow, and are susceptible to wind closures. The new and replaced chairlifts will be faster, more comfortable, and safer which will improve the quality of the alpine ski experience. The new chairs were also designed to be less susceptible to wind closures, which will provide more reliable access to terrain across EMR. The improved chairlift technology will not only improve the safety for skiers on the lift, but since these lifts will be less likely to close due to wind there will be improved access to the terrain across EMR and therefore lower skier densities. The Placer Express chairlift in particular was designed to withstand windy conditions. It is located off of the ridgeline where it will be protected. In addition to providing access to terrain on the back-side of EMR during windy conditions, this chairlift will also allow guests to ski the back-side top to bottom, thereby fully utilizing the terrain in this area. All of these infrastructure upgrades, including the new Challenge Mountain facility and expansion to the Lookout facility, will improve the guest experience across EMR.

Consistency with the Forest Plan

Ski areas, including EMR, occupy only a small portion of the approximately 2 million-acre ARP. However, ski areas provide numerous economic benefits to communities and connect the American public to their public lands. These improvements at EMR will enhance the recreation experience while focusing impacts in a region of the ARP where they are acceptable. At a forest-wide scale, the impacts related to my decision will be minimal. In addition, the impacts are concentrated in an area where there is already heavy recreational use (adjacent to the existing ski area and other popular surrounding dispersed recreation areas).

During the scoping and DEIS comment periods we received a number of comments questioning the consistency of these projects with the Forest Plan. The Forest Plan includes the following statement: “Continue authorization of downhill skiing at Eldora Ski Area under their special-use permit and master development plan. Further improvements of the base facilities, infrastructure, and ski runs within the current boundary are expected. There will be no expansion of the area outside the boundaries currently specified in the Master Plan. It is anticipated that actual use levels will increase. There will, however, be

no increase in the established maximum daily capacity." (Forest Plan p. 2-54). My decision is consistent with this statement because the projects contained in my decision are included in the EMR's 2011 Master Plan.

My decision includes a Forest Plan Amendment to change management area allocations in the vicinity of the new projects (the reader is referred to Appendix B of the FEIS for additional information). The Forest Plan Amendment will assign Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts to certain areas that are currently unallocated and will reassign certain areas that are currently assigned Management Area 1.3, 4.3 and 7.1. I am aware that reallocating these lands to Management Area 8.22 could result in additional use, but I have considered the recreational benefits as well as the environmental impacts and I feel that the ski area is the best use for this land. All areas included in the Forest Plan Amendment are immediately adjacent to the existing ski area, and impacts can be effectively managed. The allocation of lands to Management Area 8.22 also changes the designated SIO to *Low* and the ROS designation to *Rural.* Specific to the Middle Boulder Creek side of the ski area, those lands beyond the current SUP boundary were privately held prior to the last issuance of the SUP to EMR and the completion of the Forest Plan. My expectation is that those lands would have been allocated as Management Area 8.22 and within the EMR SUP boundary if they had been NFS lands at that time; those lands from the existing SUP boundary to Middle Boulder Creek are naturally suited for ski area use.

My decision includes a Forest Plan Amendment to preclude the applicability of Forest Plan Standard 99 specifically in the Middle Boulder Creek area. The intent of the standard is to maintain wildlife travel corridors within riparian areas, which for this project, includes the Middle Boulder Creek corridor adjacent to the approved Placer Express chairlift and terrain. Throughout the planning and environmental review process, important consideration was given to the Middle Boulder Creek riparian area and how impacts could be minimized. Alternatives were considered (both in detailed analysis and through alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis) to minimize impacts to wildlife and the watershed. I have included additional PDCs in the FEIS and this decision (Appendix A) that will further minimize impacts to the wildlife travel corridor by maximizing the vegetative buffer between the approved ski trails and Middle Boulder Creek and minimizing the width of the collector ski trail near the creek to the greatest extent possible. A wildlife travel corridor currently exists on the north and south side of the creek. My decision will impact approximately 200 feet of the wildlife travel corridor due to the location of the Placer Express chairlift bottom terminal. From a ski area planning standpoint, this is the best location for the chairlift that accounts for (i.e., avoids) surrounding streams and wetlands. My team of resource specialists have endeavored to minimize the impacts (which will primarily occur during the approximately five month ski season), but due to the specific language of Standard 99, my decision does not fully comply. Therefore, it is appropriate in this specific instance to remove the applicability of Standard 99 to the Middle Boulder Creek area.

I believe that the implementation of the extensive PDCs included in my decision (Appendix A of this ROD) will effectively minimize impacts to resources on NFS lands. In addition to PDCs included in the Appendix A, the projects were adjusted during field-fitting to avoid sensitive resources. For example, some trails in the Placer area were eliminated, trail P-6 will be relocated to avoid wetlands, the bottom terminal of the Placer Express chairlift will be moved further away from Middle Boulder Creek, and the construction and emergency access bridge will be designed to minimize stream impacts.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A scoping notice, dated June 28, 2012, was mailed to approximately 220 community residents, interested individuals, public agencies, and other organizations. The information within the notice provided a brief description of the proposal, the Purpose and Need for action, and an illustrative map. This notice was specifically designed to elicit comments, concerns, and issues pertaining to the proposal. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement was published in the Federal Register on July 6, 2012.

Immediately prior to scoping, EMR notified the ARP of a design change to the proposed Jolly Jug chairlift and terrain network. The June 28, 2012, scoping letter and map erroneously included EMR's design change for the proposed Jolly Jug chairlift and terrain network, and Special Use Permit (SUP) boundary adjustment rather than the ARP's Proposed Action. This possible design change clearly differed from the accepted 2011 Master Plan for EMR. The ARP distributed a *corrected* scoping letter, dated July 13, 2012, to the public documenting the correction and requesting the public comment on the ARP's Proposed Action, in addition to EMR's design change to the Jolly Jug chairlift and terrain network.

The corrected ARP Proposed Action for this environmental analysis is as described in the 2011 Master Plan. The ARP officially submitted a correction to the Federal Register for the NOI to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which was published on July 20, 2012. Due to the scoping notice and NOI correction, the ARP extended the scoping period through August 31, 2012. During the scoping period, two public open houses were held by the ARP—one on July 18, 2012, in Boulder, Colorado at the Boulder Ranger District office and a second on July 19, 2012, in Nederland, Colorado at the Nederland Community Center. Additional information was available on the project website (www.eldoraeis.com) and comment submissions were accepted on this website. Comments were accepted from the following sources: email, web submission, letter, public meetings, fax, and phone. During the scoping period, the ARP received approximately 1,400 comment submittals.

All of the submittals were reviewed and comments were extracted and categorized by resource or topic. These comments were reviewed by the ARP Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) during and subsequent to the post-scoping ID Team meeting on October 10, 2012. The ID Team used comment disposition codes to identify issues and to formulate potential alternatives to the Proposed Action in response to external (public and agency) and internal (ARP) concerns. A range of issues identified in Chapter 1 of the FEIS

defined the analysis; the primary issues that created Alternative 3 included, impacts to Middle Boulder Creek, wildlife impacts, water quality impacts and scenery impacts. On February 28, 2014, a Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register for the DEIS. The DEIS was released for public review and comment for a 45-day comment period which extended through April 14, 2014. During the comment period, two public open houses were held by the ARP—one on March 25, 2014 in Nederland, Colorado at the Nederland Community Center, and a second on March 26, 2014 in Boulder, Colorado at the Boulder West Senior Center. The DEIS and supporting materials (including resource technical reports) were made available on the project website (www.eldoraeis.com). Comments were accepted from the following sources: email, web submission, letter, public meetings, fax, and phone. Approximately 1,034 comments were received during the DEIS comment period. From these letters, substantive comments were extracted and entered into a database; comments were linked to specific commenters and resource issues. Substantive comments are addressed in Appendix D of the FEIS.

CONSIDERATION OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES

NEPA requires that a range of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action be developed and analyzed. By definition, alternatives must meet the Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action while responding to issues identified during scoping. Therefore, in response to internal and external scoping, the Forest Service Interdisciplinary (ID) Team considered issues that would generate alternatives to the Proposed Action. Both CEQ Regulations and Forest Service Handbook direction emphasize that alternatives must meet the "reasonableness" criteria in order to warrant detailed analysis. In response to identified issues, Alternative 3 was developed to avoid impacts in the vicinity of the Middle Boulder Creek corridor.

I am confident that the ID Team considered a reasonable range of alternatives early in the NEPA process, and that the two action alternatives and the required No Action Alternative, analyzed in the FEIS are adequate for the scope and scale of this project. In addition to the alternatives considered in detail below, 17 alternatives considered but not analyzed in detail are presented in the FEIS (pp. 2-39 through 2-45).

ALTERNATIVE 1 – NO ACTION

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, a No Action Alternative is included in this analysis for review alongside the action alternatives.[6] By definition, the No Action Alternative represents a continuation of existing management practices without changes, additions, or upgrades to existing conditions. Brief descriptions of existing on-mountain facilities and services are provided below. The No Action Alternative is depicted in Figure 1 of the FEIS.

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. No new facilities or recreational opportunities would be approved under the No Action Alternative. Projects

[6] Ibid.

at EMR that have been previously-approved, but not yet implemented (e.g., Corona Grading Project) are analyzed in the Cumulative Effects sections of Chapter 3 and are detailed in Appendix A of the FEIS.

The following discussion is focused on existing facilities and operations.

Terrain

The existing network of ski trails and tree and gladed skiing areas at EMR accounts for a total of approximately 336 acres of skiable terrain, accommodating a range of skier ability levels from beginner to expert. The ski trail system is comprised of approximately 49 lift-served ski trails accounting for roughly 184 acres of skiable terrain. The network of tree and gladed skiing areas accounts for roughly 152 acres of skiable terrain. No additional terrain is proposed.

Chairlifts

Under the No Action Alternative, EMR's chairlift network would remain in its current configuration. The chairlift network is composed of two fixed-grip quad chairlifts, two fixed-grip triple chairlifts, four fixed-grip double chairlifts, and three surface lifts. No additional chairlifts, chairlift replacements or chairlift upgrades are proposed.

Snowmaking

The current snowmaking system covers nearly the entire ski trail network (the ski trail network does not include gladed areas). The only exceptions are *Pipeline* trail and the upper portion of the *West Ridge* trail that do not have snowmaking coverage. The total area covered by snowmaking is approximately 164 acres. No additional snowmaking is proposed.

On-Mountain Facilities

On-mountain skier services are currently available at the top of the Corona chairlift at the Lookout facility. Services available at the Lookout are limited to food service, restrooms, and ski patrol. There is a small kitchen, indoor seating, and an outdoor deck. The Lookout facility is approximately 3,000 square feet and provides 54 indoor seats and 30 outdoor seats.

Skier service facilities in the base area on private lands include the Indian Peaks Lodge, Timbers Lodge, West Wing and East Wing. Together, these base area facilities total approximately 41,000 square feet and provide approximately 755 indoor and 550 outdoor seats.

Parking

Existing skier parking facilities have the capacity to park approximately 2,000 vehicles. All parking facilities are located on private land. No additional parking is proposed.

Vegetation Management

EMR currently conducts vegetation management within the SUP area in accordance with past ARP approval of forest health projects. Primarily, this management includes targeted pesticide application of Carbaryl in order to protect live pine or spruce trees from mountain pine beetle.

Forest Plan Amendment

The current SUP boundary is allocated as Management Area 8.22 – Ski-Based Resorts in the Forest Plan. The SUP boundary would not change under Alternative 1 and no Forest Plan Amendment would be necessary.

COMPONENTS OF ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3 THAT WERE NOT INCLUDED IN MY DECISION

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

Jolly Jug Terrain

The proposed Jolly Jug terrain includes the construction of five new ski trails (labeled as *JJ-1* through *JJ-5* on Figure 2 of the FEIS), amounting to approximately 19 acres, and the development of approximately 16 acres of tree and gladed skiing areas (labeled as Jolly Jug Glades on Figure 2 of the FEIS). The tree and gladed skiing areas within the Jolly Jug area would be closer to 50 percent overstory vegetation removal to achieve a "groomable glade" skiing experience. The proposal for the Jolly Jug terrain would add approximately 35 acres of intermediate terrain. This project component would require an adjustment to the SUP boundary of approximately 16 acres. The majority of the Jolly Jug terrain would be located on private land. If this alternative is selected, EMR would re-negotiate a lease agreement with the landowner.

Jolly Jug Chairlift

The new Jolly Jug chairlift is proposed as a detachable four- or six-person chairlift. The chairlift would have a slope length of approximately 3,250 feet, a vertical rise of approximately 750 feet and a design capacity of 1,200 people per hour (pph). The Jolly Jug chairlift bottom terminal would be located on private land, and the top terminal would be located on NFS lands to the south of the *Pipeline* trail near the top of Challenge Mountain. Ground disturbance (grading) would be required for the installation of the top and bottom terminals. The chairlift terminal structures would be colored to match the surrounding landscape and would utilize either a very low reflectivity or coated glass.

Power would be connected to the top and bottom terminals. A buried power line would extend from the top of the existing Challenge chairlift to the proposed Jolly Jug chairlift top terminal within a proposed access road. Power to the bottom terminal would be buried in the proposed access road from the top of the existing Sundance chairlift. The power lines would avoid streams and wetlands.

Alternative 3

Corona Terrain

The Corona terrain in Alternative 3 would include the construction of four new ski trails (labeled as *C-1* through *C-4* on Figure 4 of the FEIS), amounting to approximately 21 acres. Also, the development of/modification to 163 acres of tree and gladed skiing areas (labeled as Salto Glades, Bryan Glades II, Moose Glades and Placer Glades on Figure 4 of the FEIS) would occur. This terrain would be accessed primarily from the Corona chairlift. The *Lower Diamondback* and *Lower Ambush* trails would also be widened approximately 30 feet on each side of the ski trails amounting to approximately 2 acres. The proposal for the Corona terrain would add approximately 12 acres of intermediate terrain, 47 acres of advanced intermediate terrain, and 125 acres of expert terrain.

Indian Peaks Terrain

The Indian Peaks terrain would include the construction of one new ski trail (labeled as *IP-1* on Figure 4 of the FEIS), amounting to approximately 4 acres of terrain. This new ski trail would be accessible from the Corona, Indian Peaks, or Challenge chairlifts. The Indian Peaks terrain would add approximately 4 acres of intermediate terrain.

Vegetation Management Projects

Alternative 3 would include a similar suite of vegetation management prescriptions as described in Alternative 2, but the prescriptions are proposed in different locations reflecting the project elements of Alternative 3. Please refer to Figure 5 of the FEIS. The major difference in vegetation management between Alternative 3 and 2 is the application of the P4 New Tree and Gladed Skiing Area Construction prescription. As previously described, Alternative 3 includes a greater amount of modifications to existing tree and gladed skiing areas when compared to Alternative 2.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

In accordance with CEQ regulations, I am required to identify the alternative or alternatives that could be considered environmentally preferable (40 CFR 1505.29b0). Forest policy (FSH 1909.15, Section 05) defines "environmentally preferable" as:

> *"An alternative that best meets the goals of Section 101 of NEPA… Ordinarily this is the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural and natural resources."*

Based on the review of the alternatives, Alternative 1—the No Action Alternative—is the environmentally preferable alternative. Alternative 1 is identified as the environmentally preferable alternative because, by its nature, it is not accompanied by any of the acknowledged impacts to the human or biological environment associated with Alternative 2 or 3.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY LAWS, REGULATIONS AND AGENCY POLICY

This approval is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan's long term goals and objectives (the reader is also referred to Appendix B of the FEIS).[7] The project was designed in conformance with Forest Plan forest-wide management direction and incorporates appropriate Forest Plan guidance for ski areas—existing and potential.

As Forest Supervisor for the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland, I am required to manage the Forests and Grassland in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. This authority, which includes approval of ski area projects, is delegated to me through agency policy described in Forest Service Manual 1200. In reviewing the FEIS, I have concluded that my decision is consistent with all relevant laws, regulations and requirements. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978
- Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1978
- Clean Air Act of 1990, as amended
- Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended
- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, including consultation resulting in a Biological Opinion signed April 27, 2012
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended
- Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974
- Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
- National Forest Management Planning Act of 1976
- National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986, as amended
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
- Organic Administration Act of 1897, as amended
- Protection of Wetlands Executive Order 11990 and Floodplains Executive Order 11988

[7] USDA Forest Service, 1997a

Three other permits, which are outside of the Forest Service's jurisdiction, may also be required before portions of my decision may be implemented:

- Boulder County general construction permits
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Stormwater Construction Activities Permit
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 Wetland permit

PRE-DECISION OBJECTION PERIOD AND IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This draft Record of Decision is subject to two separate Forest Service objection processes pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 218 and 36 CFR 219. Those wishing to object must follow the objection requirements and timing requirements articulated below, which may result in filing two separate objections to meet the timing requirements below. Objectors may file one objection letter if it meets the timing requirement for 36 CFR 218 and 36 CFR 219.

FOREST PLAN AMENDMENTS OBJECTION PROCESS

Per Forest Service planning directives at 36 CFR 219.17(b)(2), certain project elements in this draft decision are subject to objection pursuant to Federal regulations at 36 CFR 219.52, which include the Forest Plan Amendments to assign and change Forest Plan management area allocations, SIOs and ROS classifications that would be within the proposed SUP boundary adjustment area, and to remove the applicability of Forest Plan Standard 99 to the Middle Boulder Creek riparian area.

Only those who submitted timely and specific written comments during the scoping comment period or DEIS comment period have eligibility to file an objection to the draft decision under 36 CFR 219.53. Objections, including attachments, must be in writing and filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) with the Objection Reviewing Officer, Regional Forester Dan Jirón, (36 CFR 219.54) within **60 days** following the date of publication of a legal notice announcing the Opportunity to Object in the Fort Collins Coloradoan (36 CFR 219.56). The publication date of the legal notice in the Fort Collins Coloradoan is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection (36 CFR 219.56(b)(3)). Objections must meet the objection content requirements listed in 36 CFR 219.54(c)).

The objection should be sent to:
USDA Forest Service, Region 2 Rocky Mountain Region
Attn.: Objection Reviewing Officer
740 Simms Street
Golden, CO 80401-4720

Hours: Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays
Fax: (303) 275-5134
Email: r02admin_review@fs.fed.us
(acceptable formats for electronic objections are: rtf, pdf, doc, or docx)

PROJECT-LEVEL COMPONENTS OBJECTION PROCESS

The remainder of the projects in the draft decision (i.e., project-level components, such as chairlifts, ski runs, vegetation management and etc.) are subject to objection pursuant to Federal regulations at 36 CFR 218. Objections, including attachments, must be in writing and filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) with the Objection Reviewing Officer, Regional Forester Dan Jirón, (36 CFR 218.8) within **45 days** following the date of publication of a legal notice announcing the Opportunity to Object in the Fort Collins Coloradoan. The publication date of the legal notice in the Fort Collins Coloradoan is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection (36 CFR 218.5(c)). Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Objections will only be accepted from those who have previously submitted specific written comments during a designated opportunity for public comment (36 CFR 218.5(a)). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity and attributed to the objector, unless the issue is based on new information that arose after the opportunities to comment (36 CFR 218.8(c)). Objections must meet the objection content requirements listed in 36 CFR 218.8(d).

The objection should be sent to:
USDA Forest Service, Region 2 Rocky Mountain Region
Attn.: Objection Reviewing Officer
740 Simms Street
Golden, CO 80401-4720

Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays
Fax: (303) 275-5134
Email: r02admin_review@fs.fed.us
(acceptable formats for electronic objections are: rtf, pdf, doc, or docx)

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Implementation will occur under the Final Record of Decision (ROD); the Final ROD will be issued following the close of the Objection resolution period (36 CFR 218.12 for project-level components and 36 CFR 219.58 for Forest Plan Amendments). If no objection is received, implementation of the decision may begin on, but not before, the fifth business day following the close of the objection filing period

(36 CFR 218.12(c)(2) for project-level components and 36 CFR 219.58(c) for Forest Plan Amendments). If an objection is received, implementation may occur immediately following the close of the objection resolution period (36 CFR 218.12(a) for project-level components and 36 CFR 219.58(a) for Forest Plan Amendments) once the Final ROD has been signed.

CONTACT PERSON

For additional information concerning this Record of Decision, the FEIS, or the Forest Service objection process, contact:

K. "Reid" Armstrong
Boulder Ranger District
2140 Yarmouth Avenue
Boulder, Colorado 80301
krarmstrong@fs.fed.us
(303) 541-2532

Responsible Official:

GLENN P. CASAMASSA
Forest Supervisor
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and
Pawnee National Grassland

DATE

Appendix A

Required Project Design Criteria Incorporated in this Decision

Required Project Design Criteria Incorporated into this Decision

RECREATION
ARP would pursue an easement for the current location of Jenny Creek Trail on private land owned by EMR. The acquisition of a right-of-way for this trail is a desired condition of the ARP as identified in the Forest Plan, and would facilitate access to NFS lands, including the Indian Peaks Wilderness.
Manage the interface between resort skiers and backcountry skiers at the junction between the Jenny Creek Trail and EMR ski trails and tree and gladed skiing areas. Facilitate the passage of users of the Jenny Creek Trail through extensive signage and potentially an "uphill lane" where necessary.
Gate the proposed Placer access bridge year-round and restrict access to administrative use. Sign the gate to indicate that the chairlift is for ticketed guests only.
If unauthorized access across the proposed Placer access bridge becomes issue, implement adaptive management measures to resolve the problem.
TRAFFIC, PARKING, AND SKI AREA ACCESS
Position a public safety officer at the intersection of CR 130/SH 119 to control traffic flow during peak hours on busy ski days.
Manage ski area parking to provide adequate parking spaces for guests.
Continue and increase (possibly through the use of guest incentives) the amount of mass transportation and ride sharing to manage traffic and parking capacities. Examples to reduce vehicular traffic and parking demands include, but are not requirements: VIP parking at the front for vehicles with three or more passengers, a ten dollar food voucher for vehicles with three or more passengers, a discount coupons on bus receipts, paid parking at the base parking lot to encourage carpooling and transit use, employer-paid Eco Pass programs for staff, transit pass programs for day skiers, promotion of RTD services in EMR advertising materials, staff shuttle from satellite parking lots, etc.
The ARP encourages EMR to promote/implement a ride-sharing program to reduce vehicular traffic on access roads and the demand for parking.
The Forest Service and EMR will install signs at the proposed road spur area alerting the public that it is permissible to block the access road when there are no operations occurring in the vicinity of the Placer Express.
EMR will employ signage at the intersection of the proposed road spur and CR 130 to publicize the timing and extent of bridge use, including construction and maintenance.
The Forest Service encourages EMR to use the parking lots at Nederland High School for guests and employees to the greatest extent possible.

Required Project Design Criteria Incorporated into this Decision

SCENIC RESOURCES
Avoid straight edges where removing trees. Where the vegetation is removed, use a variable density cutting (feathering) technique and/or "scalloping" to create a more natural edge that blends into the existing vegetation.
Follow FSM guidelines (Section 2380) and Built Environment Image Guide (BEIG) guidelines: • The scenic character will be protected through appropriate siting of buildings and the use of low-impact materials and colors (e.g., indigenous construction materials, such as stone and wood, as well as low-reflective glass and roofing materials). • Remain in context with the landscape (i.e., rustic, craftsman, and country lodge styles). Architecture, materials, and colors shall follow the Forest Service's Built Environment Image Guide (BEIG). Additionally, Forest Service Handbook No. 617, "National Forest Landscape Management for Ski Areas, Volume 2, Chapter 7," refers recommended colors for ski areas on p. 37 of that handbook. The colors are darker colors; greens, browns, navy blue, grays and black.
Meet reflectivity guidelines when constructing facilities or structures, including buildings, chairlift terminals and chairs. This includes any reflective surfaces (metal, glass, plastics, or other materials with smooth surfaces), that do not blend with the natural environment. They should be covered, painted, stained, chemically treated, etched, sandblasted, corrugated, or otherwise treated to meet the solar reflectivity standards. The specific requirements for reflectivity are as follows: Facilities and structures with exteriors consisting of galvanized metal or other reflective surfaces will be treated or painted dark non-reflective colors that blend with the forest background to meet an average neutral value of 4.5 or less as measured on the Munsell neutral scale.
Final design of facilities would be reviewed and approved by the Forest Landscape Architect to ensure consistency with Forest Plan BEIG guidelines and ADA and ABA regulations.
Larger inter-trail tree islands would be maintained to minimize the impact of cleared trails.
Proposed roads would utilize natural benches to the greatest extent practicable to reduce the visual impact.
Utility lines would be buried, reducing the long-term scenery impact.
CULTURAL AND HERITAGE RESOURCES
Although site-specific surveys have been conducted, if undocumented historic and/or prehistoric sites are located during ground disturbing activities or planning activities associated with approved construction activities, they will be treated as specified in 36 CFR 800.13 concerning Post Review Discoveries.
Clearly mark the limits of disturbance to avoid known cultural resource sites.
NOISE
EMR would transport employees from the resort to the construction sites in as few vehicles as possible to ensure noise from vehicles does not reach or exceed 80 dBA, the threshold established by the Boulder County Noise Ordinance.
When practicable, EMR would transport heavy equipment necessary for construction (back-hoes, skidders, etc.) from the base area of the resort to construction sites once and then store the equipment at the construction site for the rest of the construction season.
Construction of all project components except the Placer chairlift, terrain and associated developments is expected to be accessed through the base area of EMR and would not impact the Town of Eldora.
If possible, blasting necessary for the Placer terrain pod would occur in the springtime when snow is present to reduce noise impacts.

Required Project Design Criteria Incorporated into this Decision

WILDLIFE
During construction, contractors should provide an on-site bear proof container for all edible and food related trash in order to minimize conflicts with black bears. No food products or food containers should be thrown in the larger roll-off type dumpsters.
All construction activities should be confined to daylight hours, excluding emergencies.
Construction workers are prohibited from bringing dogs to the construction site.
All vehicle windows should be kept closed and doors locked on all vehicles to prevent bear entry.
Survey for raptor nests (goshawks and flammulated and boreal owls) in areas proposed for tree removal that represent potential nesting habitat prior to tree cutting each year. A Forest Service wildlife biologist will determine where surveys are required, which may not include all tree cutting areas. A no-disturbance buffer will be required around active nests (i.e., those containing birds or eggs), with the exact time period and buffer distance to be determined based on the species and nest location, considering vegetation, topography and other factors. Removal of inactive raptor nests should be consistent with Williams (2003b) and be conducted only after authorization from the BRD following a nest inspection by a qualified biologist.
To protect cavity nesting birds, prior to tree removal, educate surveyors (marking trees for cutting) and sawyers regarding the identification and value of trees with nest cavities and the need to avoid cutting those trees. When glading, avoid cutting any tree containing a nest cavity by cutting other adjacent trees to provide the required clearing.
To the extent possible, if flammulated owls are detected within impact areas, conduct tree removal in potential nesting habitat outside of the June 15 to July 23 nesting period. Avoid cutting trees with active nests until young are fledged.
To the extent possible, if boreal owls are detected within impact areas, conduct tree removal in potential nesting habitat outside of the April 21 to July 15 nesting period. Avoid cutting trees with active nests until young are fledged.
To the extent possible, if olive-sided flycatchers are detected within impact areas, conduct tree removal in potential nesting habitat outside of the June 1 to July 31 nesting period. Avoid cutting trees with active nests until young are fledged.
Vertical, open-topped pipes, tubes, and other such structures can be lethal to migratory birds and other wildlife. To minimize bird and other animal mortality caused by such structures on public lands, appropriately cap any existing and proposed uncapped vent pipes including restrooms, stove pipes, sign posts, gate posts, tubes protecting plants, and fence posts to prevent animal access, while maintaining their intended use and function (Weldon 2012). This includes any temporarily open hollow vertical pipes, such as snowmaking bases without guns.
To the extent possible, if American marten dens are detected within impact areas, direct mortality of current year recruitment could be avoided by conducting tree removal in potential denning habitat outside of the March 1 to June 15 period.
Maintain standing and down CWD, to provide beneficial foraging and breeding benefits to Canada lynx and many other wildlife species. Design CWD retention in VMP treatments to *at least* meet or exceed the minimums in Forest Plan Standard 56. For the "Sanitation/Salvage with Removal in Lodgepole Pine (P6) and Spruce-fir (P7) Stands" components of the VMP (SE Group 2013), remove only those standing and down trees that pose risks to the continued health of the forest stand. For example, a lodgepole killed by MPB three years earlier that no longer supports MPB need not be removed and treated to slow the progression of the MPB epidemic. Retention of standing and down CWD would also facilitate stand progression toward old growth in designated old growth development areas.
Design, construct, sign, and maintain the gate on the bridge over Middle Boulder Creek to exclude unauthorized human access from using the bridge to cross Middle Boulder Creek and access the otherwise relatively isolated wildlife habitat south of the creek.

Required Project Design Criteria Incorporated into this Decision

Along the Middle Boulder Creek corridor, maximize the vegetative buffer between the proposed collector trail and Middle Boulder Creek. Minimize the collector trail width while maintaining adequate width for ski trail effectiveness. Minimize tree thinning in Placer Glades II near Middle Boulder Creek while achieving ski area gladed skiing goals.
VEGETATION
RARE PLANTS AND PLANT COMMUNITIES
Prior to implementation of any project tiering to ski area improvements or the Vegetation Management Plan, surveys would be required for threatened, endangered and sensitive plants as well as plant species of local concern (SOLC) and significant natural plant communities (SNPC) within the project area in coordination with a Forest Service Botanist or Botany Representative. If such plants or communities are present, they would be avoided or PDC would be undertaken to comply with the Forest Plan and Forest Service policy.
Prior to ground disturbing activities, coordinate with a Forest Service Botany Representative to discuss the demarcation of known R2 Sensitive or SOLC plant species or SNPC to ensure impacts are avoided to the greatest extent practicable and to ensure impacts fall within the analyzed impact determinations.
If any previously unknown occurrences of TE or R2 Sensitive plants are encountered within the project footprint prior to or during project implementation, a Forest Service Botany Representative will be notified to derive suitable measures to avoid or minimize impacts as appropriate. If TE plants were to be encountered or determined to have adverse impacts, consultation with the USFWS would occur as appropriate.
Individual conifer trees or stands that the Forest Service determines to be noteworthy for biological or recreational/aesthetic values will be considered for retention on the landscape or for receiving reduced treatment impacts, when practicable. Examples include very old trees or stands, "bonsai" trees, and genetic reserves of limber pine not yet succumbing to MPB or WPBR.
Slash and debris will not be piled in populations of any PTES, SOLC or SNPC.
Consult with USFWS regarding downstream PTES plant species.
Prior to the replacement of the Cannonball and Challenge chairlifts on private land, protection measures will be implemented, if feasible, to avoid *Botrychium* spp. so they are not adversely impacted during chairlift replacement. Such protection measures may include demarcating these rare plants with orange construction fencing or other similar materials and educating construction personnel as to their location. If possible, these areas should be protected from ground disturbing activities or temporarily stockpiles of slash, debris, or construction materials or equipment.
FOREST HEALTH & REVEGETATION PRACTICES
Contact an ARP Forester or resource specialist if elevated levels of pest activity are observed.
Prior to ground-disturbing activities, EMR must submit for review a revegetation plan. EMR will be required to re-vegetate disturbed areas to attain cover densities that would control erosion and prevent sedimentation consistent with Forest Plan Standards. Revegetation would tier to the Forest Revegetation Policy and would use native plants as much as is practicable. Genetically local seed sources would be used if available (e.g., at the ecological subsection level). Seed mixtures and mulches will be noxious weed-free and would be derived in consultation with a Forest Service Botany Representative. To prevent soil erosion, non-persistent, non-native species may be used while desired vegetation becomes established. The Forest Service must approve the seed mixtures and, for substantial revegetation needs, the revegetation technique and timing prior to implementation. The Forest Service reserves the right to independently test seed prior to seeding implementation. If weed seed is present that is tested for by the All States Weed Exam or that is listed as a Colorado noxious weed or noxious weed seed as identified by the current Colorado Weed and Colorado Weed Seed Acts, or as identified as noxious by the Federal Plant Protection Act, if cheatgrass or smooth brome is present, or if any other weed species is present that the Forest Service deems potentially harmful to local ecosystems, the seed may be rejected by the Forest Service and such seed shall be replaced at the Permittee's expense and may be re-tested by the Forest Service. The seed and seed

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lot tags shall be made available to the Forest Service for testing and lot confirmation prior to implementation in a timely manner allowing for replacement seed, if needed, to be received and tested without causing undue project delay.
Use local zone-appropriate sources when transplanting seedlings or saplings, such as from ski trails or along access roads.
When possible, obtain containerized stock from the Forest Service nursery in Bessey, Nebraska, which stores seed by elevation and habitat types for all National Forests in Region 2.
Upon completion of ground-disturbing activities, disturbed areas would be effectively mulched as required by the Forest Service to minimize erosion and sedimentation. All mulch subject to weed free certification shall comply with Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region Order No. 02-2005-01 as described below, under Noxious Weeds.
Plant seed collected from harvest operations at EMR.
Tree clearing limits would be adequately marked to minimize mistakes in clearing limits during construction.
NOXIOUS WEEDS
Prior to any treatment in habitats where PTES plant species are likely to occur, surveys must be conducted at the time when the PTES plants are reliably identifiable to determine presence or absence of these species in the project area. Coordinate with the Forest Service District Weed Coordinator to determine if surveys would be needed.
Obtain Forest Service approval prior to treating any noxious weeds. Follow the ARP Noxious Weed Management plan contained within the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for Noxious Weed Management Plan on the ARP (2003), and the July 2010 ARP Guidance to Herbicide Application on NFS lands by Non-Forest Service Personnel.
Comply with Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region Order No. 02-2005-01 requiring use of certified weed-free hay, straw, or mulch in all activities on NFS lands. The Forest Service reserves the right to inspect hay, straw or mulch and to review inspection certificates. Local, Colorado-sourced weed-free material is preferred by the Forest Service to minimize introduction of out-of-State and West Slope weeds. The certification process must be State-sanctioned and enforceable through a State program. To best ensure use of weed-free mulch, preference should be given to use of non-agricultural mulch products such as wood straw or bonded fiber matrix.
Before ground-disturbing activities, survey project areas to document the presence of any pre-existing weed infestations. Treat infestations prior to ground-disturbing activities and remove all weed seed and propagules to prevent spread.
Minimize travel through weed-infested areas or restrict travel to periods when seed spread is least likely. Treat noxious weeds along travel routes prior to and during project construction. Travel routes include ski area access roads, not county-administered roads.
Before ground-disturbing activities begin, identify and locate all equipment staging areas on NFS lands tiering to the SUP. Locate and use weed-free project staging areas. When this is not possible, treat existing noxious weeds in these areas prior to the staging of any equipment, or relocate staging areas if deemed necessary by the Forest Service.
To minimize risk of noxious weed introduction and spread, require all equipment used for ground-disturbing activities for project activities (not including service trucks or other vehicles that remain on roadways) to be clean, i.e., free of mud, dirt, plant parts, and seeds, or other debris that could contain or hold plant parts or seeds, prior to entering the project area, and prior to leaving a weed-infested project area. Equipment will be considered free of soil and other debris when a visual inspection does not disclose such material. The Forest Service reserves the right to inspect equipment prior to equipment staging or use on NFS lands.

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For equipment cleaning at EMR, such as cleaning when leaving a project site, identify sites where equipment cleaning will occur and monitor these sites closely for weed establishment.
Instruct workers to inspect their clothing and equipment and to remove and properly dispose of seeds and plants parts found. Proper disposal means bagging securely for either transport to a landfill or incineration if available.
RIPARIAN AREAS AND WETLANDS
Minimize the area of disturbance when crossing streams and wetlands; adequately mark disturbance limits.
Where impacts are necessary, restore the riparian environment upon completion of construction.
To minimize impacts to riparian areas remove riparian vegetation with methods approved by the Forest Service.
Flush-cut and leave stumps and root wads intact within riparian areas and wetlands, except in areas identified for grading activities.
A CWA Section 404 Permit would be required by the USACE prior to disturbance of any waters of the U.S., including wetlands. The permit application and permit would require the preparation and approval of a mitigation plan for the impacted stream channel and wetlands. This mitigation plan will also be submitted, reviewed and must be approved by the Forest hydrologist prior to implementation.
Prior to implementation of the Corona chairlift upgrade that would result in wetland impacts, consider the prioritization of wetland mitigation as follows: 1) Mitigate wetland impacts on NFS lands within the Middle Boulder Creek watershed 2) Mitigate wetland impacts on NFS lands on ARP 3) Mitigate wetland impacts on private lands in Boulder Creek watershed 4) Mitigate wetland impacts through wetland mitigation bank program.
Wetlands that should be avoided within and adjacent to the project area will be delineated and flagged by a qualified individual prior to construction.
Slash and debris will not be placed in wetlands.
WATERSHED AND AQUATIC RESOURCES
Avoid soil-disturbing actions during periods of heavy rain or wet soils. This measure reduces soil erosion and sediment transport during runoff events (MM-9 Design Criteria).
Prior to implementation, develop and initiate a water quality monitoring program, including baseline water quality monitoring, monitoring during construction, and monitoring during subsequent years at the discretion of the Forest Service hydrologist. This water quality monitoring would be specific to Middle Boulder Creek.
Annual water use from snowmaking will not exceed EMR's maximum water right.
EMR will be required to obtain all applicable state and local stormwater permits, including, but not limited to, a general construction permit and construction dewatering permit if necessary.
Silt fences, straw bales, straw wattles, and other standard erosion control BMPs shall be employed to contain sediment onsite.
Erosion-control monitoring: EMR shall inspect erosion control measures daily during construction. During the re-stabilization period following construction, EMR shall inspect erosion control measures weekly, or anytime 0.5 inch or more of precipitation occurs within a 24-hour time period.

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Ground disturbances in or adjacent to streams/wetlands would occur during baseflow conditions to protect water quality and minimize impacts to wetland soils/vegetation, and with sufficient time to re-vegetate before the winter season.
Install jute-netting or appropriate erosion-control matting on steep cut or fill slopes (greater than 30%) if the surface rock content is less than 35%, or if erosion problems are developing, to protect soils and enhance conditions for vegetation re-establishment.
Immediately after completion of construction, re-vegetate disturbed areas, including log landings, skid trails, and new ski trails, with ARP-approved, local seed mixtures (MM-1). Attain cover densities that would conserve site moisture and manage runoff consistent with Forest Plan Standards.
Where possible, existing surface soils and O-horizon layers will be stockpiled and preserved for re-spreading following construction.
Apply hydromulch and/or straw mulch to enhance seed establishment.
Where necessary, import certified weed-free topsoil or organic amendments (based on approval by the Forest Service soil scientist) to re-establish an O-horizon capable of supporting plant growth. Monitor and manage these areas for weeds.
Re-vegetation monitoring: EMR shall review with the ARP, the success of project revegetation and site restoration annually for the first five years following construction. Details of the re-vegetation plan shall be adjusted in response to any deficiencies identified in follow-up monitoring.
CORONA AND INDIAN PEAKS WATERSHEDS
Minimize impacts to stream health by disconnecting approximately 820 feet of existing roads in the vicinity of the existing Corona chairlift bottom terminal (MM-1 PDC) and implement the following PDC: • In-slope road surface (2 to 4% cross-slope) to drain road surface runoff into road-side ditch. • Minimize erosion in road-side ditch by implementing and maintaining standard BMPs for erosion control. For example, line ditch with adequate size rock and/or install check dams at adequate intervals (MM-10 Design Criteria). • Install road-relief culverts at a spacing adequate for the road slope and ditch characteristics. • Design, implement, and maintain standard sediment and erosion control BMPs (e.g., rip-rap, fiber logs and small sediment traps) at the discharge of road-side ditches and culverts. Where possible, discharge runoff into well vegetated areas, away from the WIZ.
Minimize impacts to stream health by disconnecting 1,335 feet of the Corona Road and an additional 490 feet of an existing spur road off the Corona Road leading to the Indian Peaks chairlift bottom terminal (MM-1 Design Criteria) and implement the following PDC: • Stream channels currently cross these sections of roads through culverts and road-side ditches discharge directly into the streams. To disconnect these roads, design, install, and maintain BMPs for energy dissipation and erosion control (such as rip-rap) at the outlet of these culverts. • In-slope road surface (2 to 4% cross-slope) to drain road surface runoff into road-side ditch. • Minimize erosion in road-side ditch by implementing and maintaining standard BMPs for erosion control (e.g., line ditch with adequate size rock, install check dams at adequate intervals). • Install road-relief culverts at a spacing adequate for the road slope and ditch characteristics (MM-10 Design Criteria). • To the extent possible, select the location of drains for roads and other graded areas to disperse runoff into stable, well vegetated areas away from the WIZ. • Design, install, and maintain standard BMPs for sediment and erosion control (e.g., rip-rap, fiber logs and small sediment traps) at the discharge of road ditches and culverts.

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All new, permanent roads should be designed, constructed, and maintained to drain into the road-side ditch by insloping the road surface (achieve 2 to 4% cross slope). Route road drainage through adequate BMPs for erosion and sediment control and discharge into stable, well vegetated areas.

Construct new road sections to the proposed Challenge Mountain Facility, Challenge chairlift top terminal, and Placer chairlift top terminal and implement the following PDC:

- Stabilize and maintain roads and other disturbed sites during and after construction to control erosion (MM-11).
- Make cuts, fills, and road surfaces strongly resistant to erosion (MM-9 Design Criteria).
- Provide appropriate road surface (i.e., dirt or gravel) on all new road sections.
- In-slope road surface (2 to 4% cross-slope) to drain road surface runoff into road-side ditch.
- Minimize erosion in road-side ditch by implementing and maintaining standard BMPs for erosion control (e.g., line ditch with adequate size rock, install check dams at adequate intervals).
- Design road ditches and cross drains to limit flow to ditch capacity and prevent erosion and failure (MM-10 Design Criteria). At a minimum, install cross drains at 100-foot intervals; if needed, adjust cross drain spacing according to standard practices.
- To the extent possible, select the location of drains for roads and other graded areas to disperse runoff into stable, well vegetated areas.
- Design, install, and maintain BMPs for erosion control (such as rip-rap, fiber logs and small sediment traps) at the outlet of road ditches and culverts.

The following PDC apply to the design and construction of the new access road to the proposed Placer chairlift bottom terminal, to be constructed on both sides of Middle Boulder Creek, approximately 250 feet in total length:

- Stabilize and maintain roads and other disturbed sites during and after construction to control erosion (MM-11).
- Make cuts, fills, and road surfaces strongly resistant to erosion (MM-9 Design Criteria).
- Minimize road surface erosion and associated sediment input into Middle Boulder Creek. Construct road surface with erosion-resistant materials, such as crushed rock or compacted gravel (MM-9 Design Criteria).
- Limit road width and length to the minimum extent possible (MM-9).
- Construct roads to minimize sediment discharge into Middle Boulder Creek (MM-10). Avoid down-road flow and ponding by cross sloping road surface 2 to 4%. Construct road with crown fill or in-slope road cross sections (based upon final grading plan).
- Design and construct road-side ditches to drain surface runoff away from Middle Boulder Creek to the extent practicable. Do not discharge road runoff directly into the stream; instead, route road runoff through sediment and erosion control BMPs, such as fiber logs and small sediment traps. Inspect and maintain BMPs a minimum of twice annually: (1) in the spring, as soon as conditions allow; and (2) in the fall season, before snow covers the ground.

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- Minimize erosion in road-side ditch by implementing and maintaining standard BMPs for erosion control (e.g., line ditch with adequate size rock, install check dams at adequate intervals).
- Design road ditches and cross drains to limit flow to ditch capacity and prevent erosion and failure (MM-10 Design Criteria). At a minimum, install cross drains at 30-foot intervals.

The following PDC would minimize potential impacts associated with the proposed bridge over Middle Boulder Creek to access the bottom terminal of the Placer chairlift:

- Design and construct bridge over Middle Boulder Creek to provide for passage of flow and sediment, withstand expected flood flows, and allow free movement of aquatic life (MM-4). Obtain all necessary State and USACE permits.
- Design and construct bridge over Middle Boulder Creek to avoid any impacts to pool and riffle complexes in the stream.
- Design and construct bridge over Middle Boulder Creek to sustain bank full dimensions of width, depth, and slope and keep streambeds and banks resilient (MM-4 Design Criteria).
- Construct bridge over Middle Boulder Creek during periods of low stream flow, typically late summer or early fall.
- Keep construction equipment out of streams, except if specifically authorized by the ARP or if protected by 1 foot packed snow minimum. This measure sustains stream integrity (MM-3 Design Criteria). If construction equipment is required to access the stream channel for construction of the proposed bridge over Middle Boulder Creek, EMR will obtain all necessary local, State, and Federal permits.

The following PDC would minimize potential impacts for construction of the Placer chairlift bottom terminal and replacement of the Corona chairlift bottom terminal:

- Before grading, remove and properly stockpile topsoil so it can be utilized during restoration.
- Disconnect disturbed areas from stream networks (MM-1).
- Stabilize and maintain site during and after construction to control erosion (MM-11).
- Make cuts, fills, and graded surfaces strongly resistant to erosion (MM-9 Design Criteria).
- Grade bottom terminals to drain surface runoff into well vegetated areas and away from stream channels.
- Route surface runoff originating in graded terrain through BMPs for sediment and erosion control, such as fiber logs and sediment traps.
- Properly compact fills (MM-11 Design Criteria).
- Revegetate cuts and fills immediately after completion of grading using ARP-approved, native seeds. Install temporary BMPs for sediment and erosion control until planted vegetation provides erosion control (MM-11 Design Criteria).
- Inspect and maintain BMPs for sediment and erosion control at least twice annually: (1) in the spring, as soon as conditions allow; and (2) in the fall season, before snow covers the ground.

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The following PDC would minimize potential impacts for construction of the following projects: (1) proposed Placer chairlift top terminal; (2) Corona chairlift replacement top terminal; (3) Challenge Mountain Facility; (4) Lookout facility expansion; (5) grading of sections of ski trails P-1, P-3, P-5, and P-6; and (6) various utility installation projects.

- Before grading vegetated areas, remove and properly stockpile topsoil so it can be utilized during restoration.
- Stabilize and maintain site during and after construction to control erosion (MM-11).
- Make cuts, fills, and graded surfaces strongly resistant to erosion (MM-9 Design Criteria).
- Properly compact fills (MM-11 Design Criteria).
- Revegetate cuts and fills immediately after completion of grading using ARP-approved, native seeds.
- Install temporary BMPs for sediment and erosion control until planted vegetation provides erosion control (MM-11 Design Criteria).
- To the extent possible, avoid operating heavy equipment on slopes steeper than 30%.

The following PDC would minimize potential impacts for construction of proposed ski trails in the Corona and Indian Peaks watersheds (approximately 35 acres of tree removal only, no grading).

- Prior to ski trail construction, clearly flag tree clearing limits.
- All new ski trails with no grading, individual tree removal, and chairlift corridors would be constructed by "flush cutting" removed trees.
- To the extent possible, avoid operating heavy equipment on slopes over 30%.
- Where it doesn't present a skier safety concern, fell trees into the intertrail islands (i.e., not in the proposed gladed skiing areas) within the WIZ to improve LWD density. Applies to trails C-4, P-5, P-6, and lower sections of C-2, P-3, and P-4.
- Where practicable, do not allow skiing within Middle Boulder Creek's WIZ outside of designated ski trails (i.e., skier's left of traverse to Placer chairlift bottom terminal). This measure would maximize vegetative growth in the riparian areas.
- To the extent practicable, water bars must be designed and constructed to discharge surface runoff originating within the proposed ski trails away from the WIZ and into well vegetated areas, effectively disconnecting disturbed areas from the stream network. This measure applies to those sections of proposed trails C-2; P-3; P-4; P5; and P-6 within 100 feet of stream channels tributary to Middle Boulder Creek.
- In instances where, due to terrain conditions, water bars discharge within 100 feet of a stream channel, the downstream end of water bars will include BMPs for sediment separation and dispersion of flow, such as sediment traps and fiber logs.
- Water bars and associated BMPs must be installed immediately after construction of the ski trail.
- Inspect water bars during the first snowmelt season following construction to ensure surface runoff is being conveyed and discharged adequately. Modify waterbars/construct additional waterbars as necessary.
- Periodically inspect and maintain waterbars and associated BMPs.

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PETERSON LAKE WATERSHED
Disconnect approximately 1,770 feet of the mountain road from the base area to the maintenance shop. This section of the road is located within 200 feet of a stream channel tributary to Peterson Lake. This PDC would offset the impacts of 0.5 acre of existing CDA and reduce the length of total stream network, as directed in MM-1 of the WCPH. • In-slope road surface (2 to 4% cross-slope) to drain road surface runoff into road-side ditch. • Minimize erosion in road-side ditch by implementing and maintaining standard BMPs for erosion control. For example, line ditch with adequate size rock and/or install check dams at adequate intervals (MM-10 Design Criteria). • Install road-relief culverts at a spacing adequate for the road slope and ditch characteristics. • Design, implement, and maintain standard sediment and erosion control BMPs (e.g., rip-rap, fiber logs and small sediment traps) at the discharge of road-side ditches and culverts. Where possible, discharge runoff into well vegetated areas, away from the WIZ.
Disconnect approximately 0.4 acre of parking area and access road adjacent to and immediately upstream of the stream channel tributary to Peterson Lake. • Make parking area surface strongly resistant to erosion (MM-9 Design Criteria). • Provide and maintain parking area slopes to adequately drain surface runoff (i.e., avoid ponding and excessive flow velocities). • Design, construct, and maintain drainage ditches to collect runoff originating in the parking areas. Where possible, discharge runoff into well vegetated areas, away from the WIZ. • Minimize erosion in drainage ditches by implementing and maintaining standard BMPs for erosion control (e.g., line ditch with adequate size rock, install check dams at adequate intervals). • Minimize sediment discharge into streams, lakes, and wetlands (MM-10). Properly design, implement, and maintain standard sediment and erosion control BMPs (e.g., rip-rap, fiber logs and small sediment traps) at the discharge of parking lot drainage.
The following PDC would minimize impacts to stream health and watershed condition associated with vegetation clearing and terrain grading proposed for construction of additional parking: • Make cuts, fills, and parking area surface strongly resistant to erosion (MM-9 Design Criteria). • Stabilize and maintain site during and after construction to control erosion (MM-11). • Design and construct parking area to drain and discharge surface runoff through sediment control BMPs, such as sediment traps, to minimize sediment discharge into streams, lakes, and wetlands (MM-10). • To the extent practicable, select the location of drains to disperse runoff into stable, well vegetated areas. • Inspect BMPs annually and implement necessary maintenance and improvements.

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The following PDC would minimize impacts associated with tree removal and terrain grading needed for construction of the proposed Challenge chairlift replacement:

- Prior to tree removal, clearly flag tree clearing limits.
- Before grading, remove and properly stockpile topsoil so it can be used during site restoration.
- Stabilize and maintain site during and after construction to minimize erosion. Properly compact fills (MM-11).
- Make cuts, fills, and graded surfaces strongly resistant to erosion (MM-9 Design Criteria).
- Properly compact fills (MM-11 Design Criteria).
- Grade surfaces to drain runoff into well vegetated areas.
- Revegetate cuts and fills immediately after completion of grading using ARP-approved, native seeds. Install BMPs to control sediment and erosion until revegetation is successful (MM-11 Design Criteria).
- Inspect BMPs for erosion and sediment control during first runoff season following construction. Maintain or improve BMPs as needed.

JENNY CREEK-EMR WATERSHED

The following PDC would minimize potential impacts vegetation removal and terrain grading needed for construction of the Jolly Jug chairlift bottom terminal. Under The PDC would disconnect the chairlift terminal from the stream network:

- Before grading, remove and properly stockpile topsoil so it can be utilized during restoration.
- Disconnect disturbed areas from stream networks (MM-1).
- Stabilize and maintain site during and after construction to control erosion (MM-11).
- Make cuts, fills, and graded surfaces strongly resistant to erosion (MM-9 Design Criteria).
- Properly compact fills (MM-11 Design Criteria).
- To the extent practicable, grade bottom terminal to drain surface runoff into well vegetated areas and away from the ephemeral swale.
- Route all surface runoff originating in graded terrain through BMPs for sediment and erosion control, such as fiber logs and sediment traps.
- Inspect and maintain BMPs for sediment and erosion control at least twice annually: (1) in the spring, as soon as conditions allow; and (2) in the fall season, before snow covers the ground.
- Revegetate cuts and fills immediately after completion of grading using ARP-approved, native seeds. Install temporary BMPs for sediment and erosion control until planted vegetation provides erosion control (MM-11 Design Criteria).

All new, permanent roads should be designed, constructed, and maintained to drain surface runoff by sloping their surfaces to the road-side ditch (achieve 2 to 4% cross slope). Route road drainage through adequate BMPs for erosion and sediment control and discharge into stable, well vegetated areas.

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The PDC apply to the design and construction of the access road to the Jolly Jug chairlift bottom terminal. The lower 400 feet of the planned road, closest to the chairlift terminal, are adjacent to a natural swale tributary to Jenny Creek. Implementing these measures would minimize potential impacts to the stream health of Jenny Creek associated with terrain grading needed for construction of this road:

- Limit road width and length to the minimum extent possible (MM-9).
- To minimize road surface erosion and associated sediment input into the stream system, construct road surface with erosion-resistant materials, such as crushed rock or compacted gravel (MM-9 Design Criteria).
- Construct roads to minimize sediment discharge into the stream system (MM-10). Avoid down-road flow and ponding by cross sloping road surface 2 to 4%.
- Design road ditches and cross drains to limit flow to ditch capacity and prevent erosion and failure (MM-10 Design Criteria).
- Minimize erosion in road-side ditch by implementing and maintaining standard BMPs for erosion control (e.g., line ditch with adequate size rock, install check dams at adequate intervals).
- Design and construct road-side ditch to drain surface runoff away from the existing swale to the extent practicable. Do not discharge road runoff directly into the swale; instead, route road runoff through sediment and erosion control BMPs, such as fiber logs and small sediment traps. Inspect and maintain BMPs a minimum of twice annually: (1) in the spring, as soon as conditions allow; and (2) in the fall season, before snow covers the ground.
- Stabilize and maintain roads and other disturbed sites during and after construction to control erosion (MM-11).

The following PDC would minimize potential impacts of tree removal and terrain grading required for construction of the Lookout Facility expansion and the Jolly Jug chairlift top terminal and access road. These measures would effectively limit the extent of CDA and the length of total stream network in the Jenny Creek Watershed (MM-1 Design Criteria).

- Stabilize and maintain sites during and after construction to control erosion (MM-11).
- Before grading, remove and properly stockpile topsoil so it can be used during site restoration.
- Make cuts, fills, and graded surfaces strongly resistant to erosion (MM-9 Design Criteria).
- The road to the proposed Jolly Jug chairlift top terminal should be designed, constructed, and maintained to drain surface runoff by in-sloping their surface to the road-side ditch (achieve 2 to 4% cross slope).
- Construct road-side ditch to capture and convey road surface runoff.
- Design road ditch and cross drains to limit flow to ditch capacity and prevent erosion and failure (MM-10 Design Criteria). Route road ditch drainage through adequate BMPs for sediment control (such as fiber logs or small sediment traps) and discharge into well vegetated areas.
- Limit road width and length to the minimum extent possible (MM-9).
- Grade chairlift terminal to drain surface runoff into well vegetated areas.
- Revegetate cuts and fills immediately after completion of grading using ARP-approved, native seeds. Install temporary BMPs for sediment and erosion control until planted vegetation provides erosion control (MM-11 Design Criteria).
- Inspect and maintain BMPs for sediment and erosion control during the first snowmelt season following construction to ensure surface runoff is being conveyed and discharged adequately.
- Periodically inspect and maintain waterbars and associated BMPs during subsequent snowmelt seasons.

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The following PDC would offset impacts associated with tree removal needed for construction of the Jolly Jug ski trails: • Prior to tree removal, clearly flag tree clearing limits. • All new ski trails with no grading would be constructed by "flush cutting" removed trees. • Water bars must be designed and constructed to discharge surface runoff originating within the proposed ski trails into well vegetated areas. • Water bars must be constructed immediately after completion of the ski trail. • Inspect water bars during the first snowmelt season following ski trail construction to ensure surface runoff is being conveyed and discharged adequately. Special attention should be paid to indications of erosion, such as rilling and headcutting, both along the waterbar and at its discharge. If necessary, install BMPs for erosion control, such as check dams along the waterbars to reduce flow velocities and small sediment traps with riprap-protected outlets at the outfall of waterbars. • Periodically inspect and maintain waterbars and associated BMPs during subsequent snowmelt seasons. • Immediately after completion of construction re-vegetate new ski trails, with ARP-approved seed mixtures (MM-1). Attain cover densities that would conserve site moisture and manage runoff consistent with Forest Plan Standards. • Where possible, existing surface soils and O-horizon layers will be stockpiled and preserved for re-spreading following construction. • Where necessary, import certified weed-free topsoil or organic amendments (based on approval by the Forest Service soil scientist) to re-establish an O-horizon capable of supporting plant growth. Monitor and manage these areas for weeds.
AIR QUALITY
To the extent feasible, site improvements would be installed promptly in order to reduce the potential for dust emissions.
Grading areas, including chairlift terminal areas, would be watered as necessary and practical to prevent excessive amounts of dust. In the absence of natural precipitation, watering of these areas would occur as practical.
All necessary air quality permitting will be obtained by EMR, as necessary, prior to construction.
If the renovation of the Lookout will disturb suspect asbestos building materials greater than trigger levels, then prior to this renovation an Asbestos Inspector, qualified by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), must inspect and test building materials to be affected. If verified asbestos containing building materials must be disturbed, then those materials must be removed prior to the renovation.
Unnecessary idling of construction equipment is prohibited.
Use low-sulfur fuel, if possible.
Heavy construction equipment should use the cleanest available engines (Non-road Tier 4) or be retrofitted with diesel particulate control technology, if possible.
Use alternatives to diesel engines and/or diesel fuels such as: biodiesel, LNG or CNG, if possible.
For any winter time construction, install engine pre-heater devices to eliminate unnecessary idling.
Prohibit tampering with equipment to increase horsepower or to defeat emission control devices effectiveness.
Construction vehicle engines must be properly tuned and maintained.
Use construction vehicles and equipment with the minimum practical engine size for the intended job, when possible.

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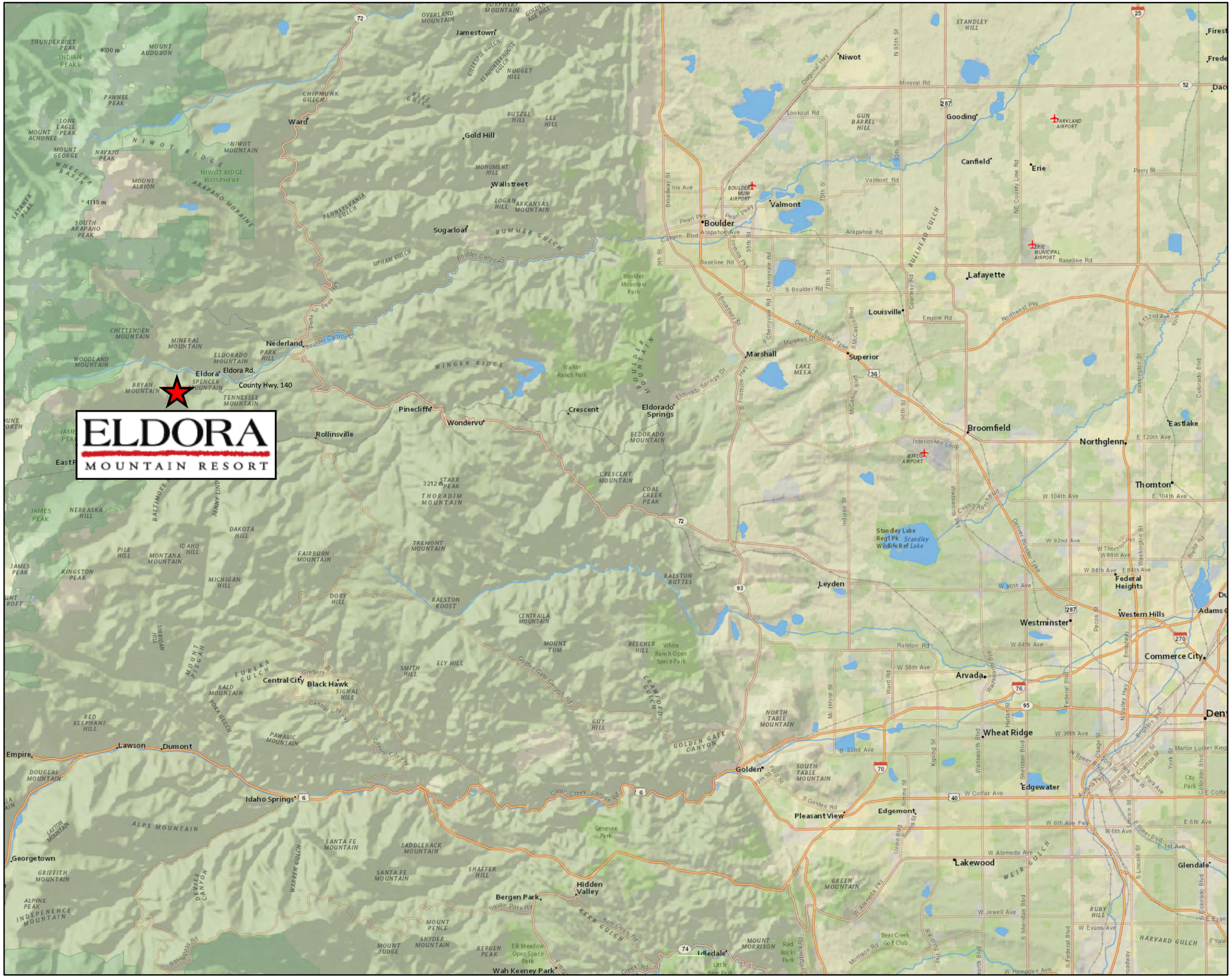
GEOLOGY AND SOILS
To the extent possible, operate on designated skid-trails and landings.
In areas to be graded, soil organic matter and topsoil would be stockpiled and re-spread after construction.
An ARP-approved seed mix would be applied to reclaimed areas and raked into the topsoil to ensure germination and establishment.
An ARP-approved hydromulch or straw mulch would be applied to reclaimed areas to enhance seed establishment and reduce the risk of erosion.
Appropriate construction equipment (skidders and/or forwarders) should be used for new trail construction to reduce impacts. Helicopters may be required on steeper slopes.
When logging over the snow, conditions should allow for 1 foot of packed snow to be continuous (i.e., not patchy) and competent enough so that wheeled or tracked vehicles do not break through. When logging over frozen ground, a minimum of 3 inches of continuous frozen ground should be present.
Where necessary, surface netting in conjunction with mulching would be used to reduce the erosion hazard.
In areas where grading or soil disturbance will occur, if topsoil is available it would be stockpiled and re-spread following slope grading and prior to re-seeding.
Areas determined to have been compacted by construction activities may require mechanical subsoiling or scarification to the compacted depth to reduce bulk density and restore porosity.
Ground cover, as a combination of revegetation, surface rocks, and mulch will be 60 to 70% following reclamation activities to minimize erosion.
Following disturbance, all areas to be reclaimed should be scarified (if compacted), appropriate soil amendments incorporated, seeded with an ARP-approved seed mix, and erosion controls measures implemented where needed. On slopes with a high erosion classification, vegetation groundcover should exceed 40% in the first year and 60% by year 2 to minimize erosion and sedimentation.
Use existing routes for construction and routine maintenance of the proposed project components, where possible.
Outside areas where grading is proposed, and in sensitive areas, trees would be removed by flush cutting.
Areas determined to have been compacted by construction activities may require mechanical subsoiling or scarification to the compacted depth to reduce bulk density and restore porosity. Areas that may require de-compaction of soil include log landings, temporary roads, and skid trails (generally within 100 feet of landings). Follow de-compaction treatment with erosion control measures and revegetation as needed. This PDC may be waived site specifically if on-site inspection by a Soil Scientist determines de-compaction is not required.
Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each activity area to prevent harmful increased runoff. Ground cover, as a combination of revegetation, pine needle cover, surface rocks, and mulch, will be 60 to 70% following reclamation activities to minimize erosion. Revegetation success and ground cover effectiveness would be determined in consultation with the Forest Service resource specialists.
Ground cover, as a combination of revegetation and mulch applications, will meet requirements for the one and two years following completion of ground disturbing activities. Re-vegetation success and ground cover effectiveness would be determined in consultation with the Forest Service resource specialists.

Required Project Design Criteria Incorporated into this Decision

If slash disposal is conducted by pile and burn, implement the following PDC to minimize impacts: • If possible, conduct pile burning over a protective layer of packed snow and/or frozen ground. • If snow/frozen ground is not present at the time of pile burning, soil organic matter and topsoil should be scraped and stockpiled prior to pile construction and re-spread after pile burning; till/scarify after burning to promote recovery by breaking up water repellent layers, increasing water infiltration, and mixing in organic material; and till/scarify after burning to promote recovery by breaking up water repellent layers, increasing water infiltration, and mixing in organic material.
Where chipping is the method used for slash disposal, implement the following PDC: • Depth of wood chips would not exceed 3 inches. • Distribute chips in discontinuous patches that do not result in a continuous chip mat (<40% of surface covered by 3 inches of chips). • Do not bury or mix the chips in with the soil.
New ski trails that terminate near Middle Boulder Creek (P3, P4, P5 and P6) should be mulched/hydromulched and berms across ski trails should be constructed to divert runoff into the adjacent forest.
The road spur to the top terminal of the Placer Express chairlift would have cross drains constructed at 200-foot intervals and the road would be in-sloped with a rock ditch to minimize erosion transport.
The road spur to the bottom terminal of the Placer Express chairlift would have cross drains installed at 30-foot intervals (or an equivalent velocity limiting drainage management devise such as rock check dams or fiber logs) and the road would be an in-sloped, gravel surface with a rock ditch. Due to the proximity of the road to the Middle Boulder Creek, this road would also require proper placement of sediment traps, silt fences, straw waddles or other erosion control measures would contain sediment from entering the creek.
SUSTAINABILITY
Shuttle services to the ski area/other recreational areas in order to reduce air emissions.
Recycle replaced or removed chairlifts when possible.
Develop a renewable energy program.
If possible, LEED certify new buildings.
Develop a transportation program with Boulder County to reduce vehicle emissions.



Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests
and Pawnee National Grassland

Boulder Ranger District

Eldora Mountain Resort
Ski Area Projects
Environmental Impact Statement

Vicinity Map

0 1 2 4 Miles

N

Date: February 2015
Prepared By:

SE GROUP

Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests
and Pawnee National Grassland

Boulder Ranger District

Eldora Mountain Resort Ski Area Projects Environmental Impact Statement

Figure ROD-1: Selected Alternative

LEGEND

Existing Conditions

- Lifts
- Ski Trails
- Tree and Gladed Skiing Areas
- SUP Boundary
- Buildings
- Parking
- Roads
- Nordic Trails
- Lake/Pond

Approved Projects

- New Lift
- Lift Removal
- Lift Replacement
- Ski Trails
- Tree and Gladed Skiing Areas
- SUP Boundary Adjustment
- Additional Parking
- 1 Challenge Mountain Facility
- 2 Lookout Facility Renovation
- New Road
- Bridge

Note: Snowmaking coverage is approved on all approved trails, excluding the glading projects.

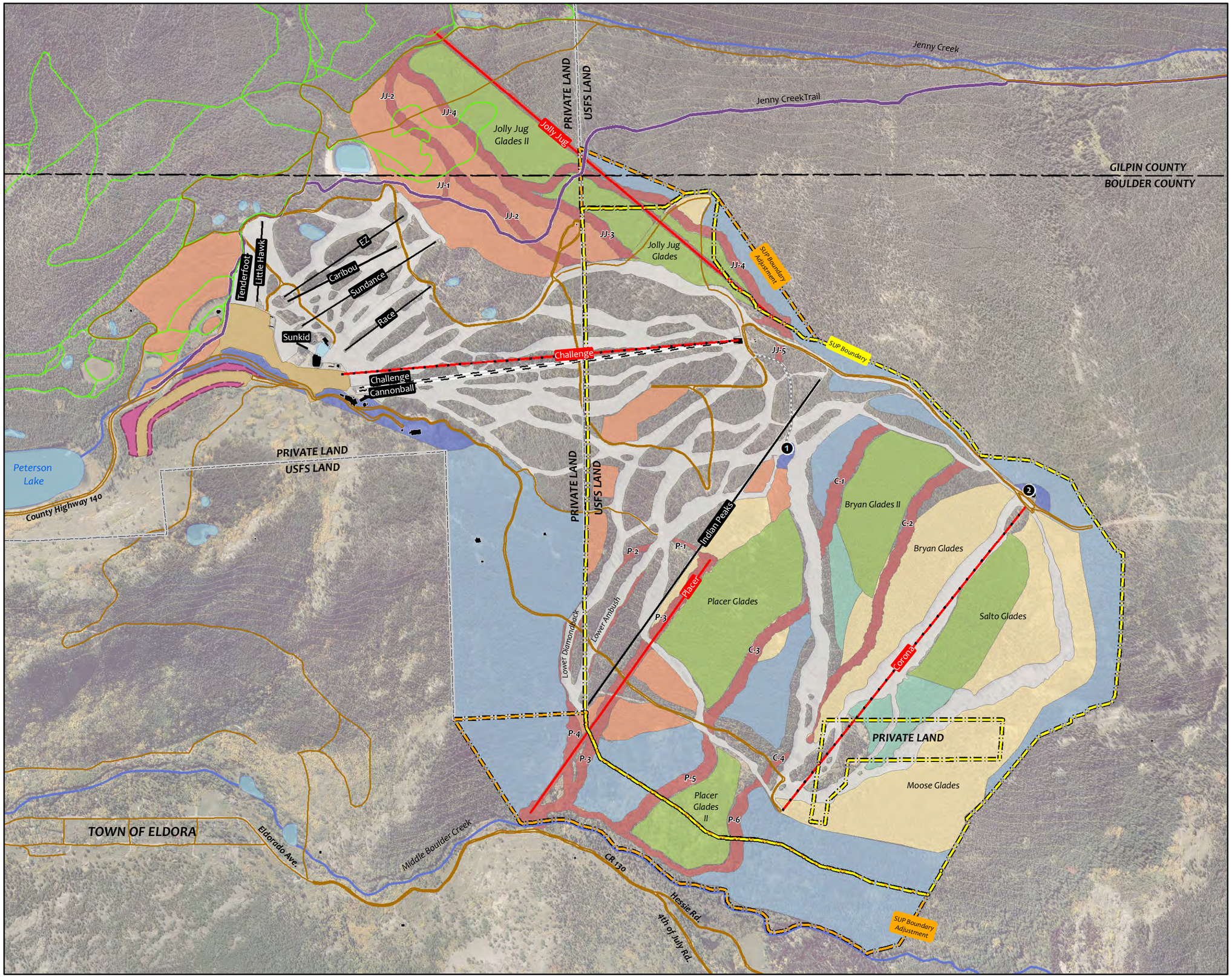
0 450 900 1,800 Feet

1 inch = 900 feet

N

Date: February 2015
Prepared By:

SE GROUP



Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests
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Boulder Ranger District

Eldora Mountain Resort
Ski Area Projects
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure ROD-2:
Selected Alternative
Vegetation Management Projects

LEGEND

Existing Conditions

- Lifts
- SUP Boundary
- Buildings
- Parking
- Roads
- Nordic Trails
- Lake/Pond

Approved Projects

- New Lift
- Lift Removal
- Lift Replacement
- SUP Boundary Adjustment
- Additional Parking
- 1 Challenge Mountain Facility
- 2 Lookout Facility Renovation

Vegetation Management Prescription

- P1- New Ski Trail Construction
- P2- Existing Ski Trail Maintenance
- P3- Defensible Space
- P4- New Tree and Gladed Skiing Area Construction
- P5- Existing Tree Island Maintenance
- P6- Sanitation/Salvage with Removal in Lodgepole Pine
- P7- Sanitation/Salvage with Removal in Spruce/Fir
- P8- Continued Forest Monitoring

0 450 900 1,800 Feet

1 inch = 900 feet

N

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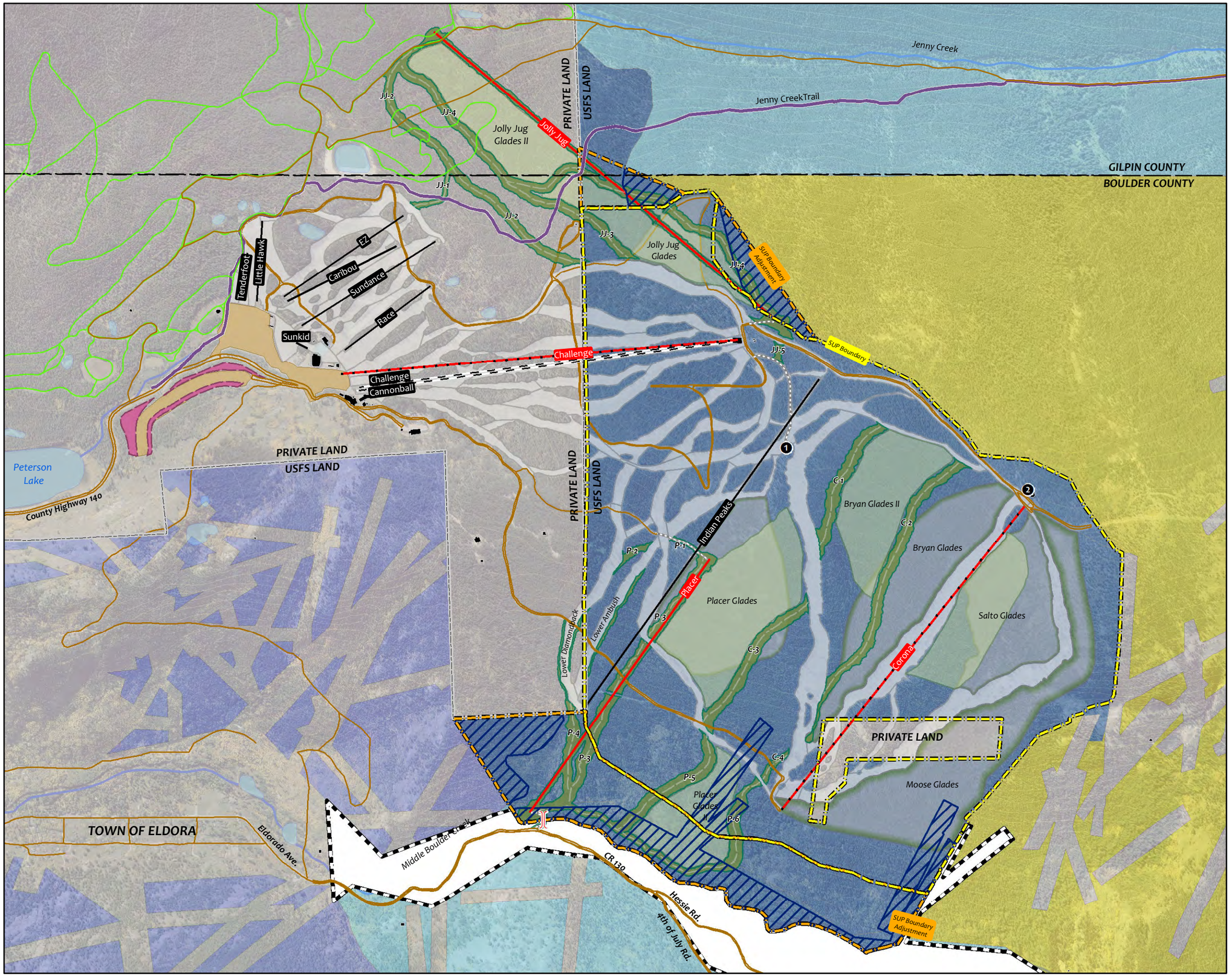

Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests
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Boulder Ranger District

Eldora Mountain Resort
Ski Area Projects
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure ROD-3:
Selected Alternative
Forest Plan Amendments

LEGEND

Existing Conditions

- Lifts
- Ski Trails
- Tree and Gladed Skiing Areas
- SUP Boundary
- Buildings
- Parking
- Roads
- Nordic Trails
- Lake/Pond

MA (SIO)

- 1.3 (High)
- 4.3 (Moderate)
- 7.1 (Moderate)
- 8.22 (Low)
- Private Land
- Not Officially Designated Lands in the Forest Plan

Approved Forest Plan Amendments

- Area Amended to Management Area 8.22 - Ski-Based Resorts (Low)

Proposed Projects

- New Lift
- Lift Removal
- Lift Replacement
- Ski Trails
- Tree and Gladed Skiing Areas
- SUP Boundary Adjustment
- Additional Parking
- 1 Challenge Mountain Facility
- 2 Lookout Facility Renovation
- New Road
- Bridge

0 450 900 1,800 Feet

1 inch = 900 feet

N

Date: February 2015
Prepared By:

SE GROUP