

**APPENDIX B**

**UPDATED CUMULATIVE EFFECTS  
ANALYSES**

# APPENDIX B – UPDATED CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSES

Appendix B reflects revisions made to the cumulative effects analyses presented in the *May 2004 Jackson Hole Mountain Resort Guided Backcountry Skiing Environmental Assessment* resulting from the Jackson Ranger District’s *conditional* acceptance (June 2004) of the proposed January 2004 JHMR Master Development Plan (2004 MDP). The EA did not analyze the 2004 MDP in a cumulative context because JHMR had not formally submitted the MDP to the Forest Service as of May 2004; therefore, the MDP projects were purely speculative in nature at that time. Cumulative effects analyses for the following resources are updated here: Recreation; Social and Economic Resources; and Parking and Traffic. (Note: Appendix A provides an updated version of the Wildlife and Vegetation Resources Analysis, including cumulative effects).

The 2004 MDP is intended to constitute a “road map” for future development at JHMR for an approximate ten year planning period. Even though this planning document has been conditionally accepted by the Forest Service, all projects are purely conceptual in nature and the potential effects of their implementation are as yet unanalyzed and undetermined. Therefore, this cumulative effects analysis is based on reasonable forecasting and logical assumptions. *Approval and implementation of any of the conceptual projects identified in the 2004 MDP is subject to a thorough environmental analysis via the NEPA process, which is likely to be conducted in up to three phases across the planning horizon.* Each phase of the 2004 MDP NEPA process will include thorough direct, indirect and cumulative effects analyses.

Until the 2004 MDP undergoes site-specific NEPA analysis, the 1994 MDP, which was approved through an Environmental Impact Statement in 1996, will be in effect and used to guide development. Conceptual projects that the 2004 MDP identifies within JHMR’s SUP area include: construction of new/upgraded aerial and surface lifts; construction of previously approved chairlifts; new/upgraded on-mountain guest service and operational facilities; terrain additions and modifications; miscellaneous additions and changes to on-mountain infrastructure; and construction of additional/previously approved snowmaking infrastructure.

In addition to projects proposed to occur within the existing SUP area, the 2004 MDP proposes to expand the SUP boundary to the southwest by approximately 690 acres into Rock Springs Bowl and Green River Bowl. No new ski trails would be constructed and only limited tree removal would occur for safety purposes. A summer hiking trail is proposed in this area.

Text that has been added to the cumulative effects analyses is indicated by grey highlighting (e.g., **new text**), while deleted text is struck through (e.g., ~~deleted text~~).

## 3B. Recreation

### Cumulative Effects

Three Four past, present or reasonably foreseeable future actions have been identified in this cumulative effects analysis for recreation resources.

As stated in the Existing Conditions section and again in the discussion of direct/indirect effects, general backcountry use of Teton Range is anticipated to increase in the future. That increased use, both guided and non-guided, has potential to further affect the backcountry experience for enthusiasts of all abilities. However, guided backcountry use within permitted areas on the Teton Range represents a small fraction of overall use, and is not considered to present a consequential or quantifiable effect to enjoyment of the backcountry. In the future, the Forest Service may explore options for addressing backcountry use, safety and enjoyment. These options may include reassessing permitted outfitter and guide operations; however, no options are developed sufficiently to consider in a cumulative context.

Each of the 12 outfitter and guide operations that are authorized to guide at Teton Pass and/or in the Rock Springs-Jensen Canyon area may seek renewal of their OG SUPs in the future. While the Existing Conditions section and the discussion of direct/indirect effects section discuss the 11 other guiding operations' historic use of the area further, site-specific NEPA analyses will need to be conducted to re-authorize each of their services on the Teton Range as individual permits come up for renewal.

As of publication of this EA, the Jackson Ranger District is also analyzing the potential direct, indirect and cumulative effects of reissuing a five-year OG SUP to High Mountain Heli-Skiing (HMH), which expired in April 2003. The effects of this permit re-authorization are analyzed and disclosed in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS),<sup>1</sup> which was made public in December 2003. A portion of HMH's OG SUP area extends northeast from Phillips Canyon to the JHMR Ski Area SUP boundary and has historically overlapped with the Rock Springs-Jensen Canyon portion of JHMR's OG SUP. However, when HMH operates in this area they tend to use terrain located far enough south (i.e., near Jensen Canyon) that they encounter few skiers that have entered the backcountry through JHMR's access points.

In addition to the No Action Alternative, which would remove heli-skiing as a recreational opportunity on the BTNF and CTNF, three action alternatives are analyzed in the HMH DEIS. Currently, the Forest Service's preferred alternative is Alternative C, which would authorize 1,000 annual service days to HMH and would remove identified crucial big game winter ranges on the BTNF and CTNF from its OG SUP. This alternative also responds to existing recreational conflicts by removing three areas from HMH's OG SUP that are popular for backcountry skiing, including the Rock Springs-No Name area. Under Alternative C, the terrain utilized by HMH would be limited to Jensen

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<sup>1</sup> USDA Forest Service, 2003

Canyon and areas south, and thus HMH and JHMR would continue to have overlapping OG SUPs (within the Jensen Canyon area). The HMH DEIS discusses potential to other recreationists, including those in the Rock Springs-Jensen Canyon area, primarily from the perspectives of noise disruption and competition for untracked powder – both of which have potential to affect the backcountry experience. Although it is acknowledged that the Rock Springs-Jensen Canyon area has historically been rarely utilized by HMH, selection of Alternative C would improve the recreational experience for backcountry skiers in this area by removing a small portion of potential utilization and eliminating the infrequent noise that accompanies heli-skiing. A Final EIS and record of decision are forthcoming.

The 2004 MDP proposes to expand JHMR's SUP boundary to the southwest by approximately 690 acres to encompass Rock Springs and Green River. As stated in the 2004 MDP, this boundary modification would improve safety for hundreds of guests currently accessing this terrain through designated access points on a regular basis. The only proposed improvements planned for this area include limited tree removal to allow for efficient and safe skier circulation through dense timber stands and the construction of a summer hiking trail, which would connect the existing hiking trail at the bottom of Rendezvous Bowl with a trail coming up from the base of the ski area. This boundary modification would allow for a higher level of continuity between the current uses in Cody Bowl and uses at the southeast corner of the ski area. This would include rescue coordination and avalanche hazard reduction activities.

NFS lands in Rock Springs and Green River are identified in the Forest Plan as Desired Future Condition 9B – Special Use Recreation Areas, defined as areas managed for permitted, private recreation homes, permittees, and others offering services to the public, including related roads and sites. Incorporating these areas into the SUP and providing ski patrol and avalanche work would increase use beyond historic levels. Should the boundary modification be implemented in the future, increased use would alter the backcountry character of Rock Springs and Green River for those seeking a more secluded experience. Incorporating Rock Springs and Green River into the SUP would logically increase backcountry use south of Green River, between Four Pines and Jensen Canyon which would likely remain in JHMR OG SUP boundary into the future.

Indications from JHMR are that the boundary modification would be incorporated into either phase 2 or 3 of the 2004 MDP NEPA analysis, meaning that this project would be a minimum of five to six years out.

## **3C. Social and Economic Resources**

### **Cumulative Effects**

Only one reasonably foreseeable future action is identified/analyzed in the cumulative effects analysis for social and economic resources. Each of the other 11 outfitter and guide operations authorized to guide at Teton Pass and in the Rock Springs-Jensen

Canyon area (limited to AAI) may ultimately seek a re-issuance of their OG SUPs in the future. Site-specific NEPA analyses will need to be conducted to re-authorize each of their services on the Jackson Ranger District. At that time, the Jackson Ranger District will determine the need for additional/modified annual service days allotted to each commercial guide service. Additionally, the Jackson Ranger District may reassess the current management of Teton Pass for backcountry skiing to address historic issues with high utilization.

Full buildout of the 2004 MDP would have potential socioeconomic effects to the Jackson Hole community by increasing visitation to the area, as well as increasing short- and long-term employment opportunities, both on and off site. It is not anticipated the projects in the 2004 MDP would affect other outfitter and guide operations operating on Teton Pass. It is assumed that people who patronize the ski area typically seek developed facilities and likely would not seek out backcountry experiences with outfitter and guide services. One other outfitter and guide permittee operates in Rock Springs and Jensen Canyon – AAI. Therefore, the possible SUP modification encompassing 690 acres of NFS lands in Rock Springs and Green River could affect AAI's operations. The potential direct, indirect and cumulative socioeconomic effects of the boundary modification would need to be fully analyzed in the upcoming NEPA analysis.

## **3D. Parking and Traffic**

### **Cumulative Effects**

During summer 2004, the Forest Service is planning to reconfigure the Trail Creek Trailhead by adding a turnaround. While this project is not intended to expand the available parking capacity, and will primarily benefit summer users of the trailhead (allowing for vehicles with trailers to better utilize the area), it will benefit winter users as well by adding another level of organization to the parking configuration. Two goals will be achieved with this project: 1) Teton County will be able to plow further up the road (to the gate), thereby allowing/defining additional winter parking; and 2) it will improve access to private residences in the vicinity of the trailhead by reducing the potential for blocked driveways.

WYDOT has allocated funds to begin a NEPA analysis of reconstruction of Highway 22 through Wilson and along Moose Wilson Road (Highway 390) between Mile Post 4 and Teton Village. While still in the preliminary stages of planning, these reconstruction projects would likely entail addressing issues associated with the structure, surface and width of the road. NEPA on these projects would likely not begin until summer 2004, with implementation not likely until 2011.

In addition, WYDOT recently completed a NEPA analysis which approved overlay and guardrail projects for Highway 22 between Wilson and the Idaho border. This includes ITS (Intelligent Transportation System) technology along Highway 22, which would

provide for electronic signage, web cameras, improved lighting and temperature sensors. These projects are slated for construction in fiscal year 2005.<sup>2</sup>

Cumulatively, these projects have potential to improve both safety and traffic flow on highways 22 and 390.

Full buildout of the 2004 MDP would potentially increase traffic flow and congestion in the Jackson Hole area – especially on Highway 22 and along Moose Wilson Road. This assumption is based on proposed 4.2 percent increase in the resort’s Comfortable Carrying Capacity, allowing for approximately 1,600 additional skiers during peak periods.

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<sup>2</sup> Hallsten 2004