

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROPOSED ACTION

The White Pass Company has submitted a proposal to the Forest Service for authorization of a new, ten year MDP to replace their existing, but outdated, 1979 document. White Pass Company has also requested that their SUP be amended to authorize site-specific implementation of the new MDP in Fiscal Year 2007. The Proposed Action, which is the White Pass proposal without modification, is depicted in Figure 1-4. It includes enlarging the White Pass SUP area to incorporate approximately 767 acres of Hogback Basin, two new chairlifts, 15 new trails covering approximately 70 acres and a mid-mountain day lodge. Previous plans for the development of Miriam Basin would be eliminated from the MDP.

Implementation of the Proposed Action would expand the alpine skiing opportunities at White Pass by increasing the Comfortable Carrying Capacity (CCC) from 2,670 to 4,250 skiers under the proposal (refer to Appendix B).¹

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

This section describes the underlying purpose and need to which the Forest Service is responding in developing the Proposed Action. It can be thought of as the objectives for the project and the reasons why action is needed. It is the difference between the existing and desired conditions.

The overall purpose of the White Pass Expansion MDP is to respond to a request by the White Pass Company to develop and implement a new MDP that is consistent with the amended Forest Plan direction and that would allow expansion of alpine skiing facilities into Hogback Basin. The current 1979 Master Development Plan was approved prior to the passage of the 1984 Washington Wilderness Act, and consequently implementation of certain portions of the 1979 MDP would be inconsistent with current management direction. In addition, current facilities have created safety concerns related to parking and pedestrian use along US 12, boundary management concerns, and undesirable skier congestion on the ski slopes.

The lands within the current SUP area for the White Pass Ski Area were allocated in the 1990 Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 1990b) to RE-1, Developed Recreation and in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 1990a) to 2L, Developed Recreation. The area proposed for expansion by the White Pass Company was also allocated

¹ The Comfortable Carrying Capacity of a mountain resort is the number of skiers an entire resort can comfortably accommodate at any given time and still guarantee a pleasant recreation experience. A resort's CCC does not reflect the number of skiers on the mountain at one time. Generally, 70 to 85 percent of a mountain's total CCC would be active skiers, including those on the trails, riding lifts, and waiting in lift lines. The remaining 15 to 30 percent would be using guest service facilities or milling in areas near these facilities. Refer to Appendix B – Mountain Plan Specifications for additional information regarding CCC.

to a Developed Recreation prescription (MA 2L) by the 1990 Gifford Pinchot Land and Resource Management Plan. The goal of these allocations is to provide for a diverse range of developed recreation opportunities, including existing and potential alpine ski areas which are specifically recognized by both plans. This developed winter recreation experience is currently being provided by the White Pass Company under SUP to the Forest Service. The SUP enables the Forest Service to offer public recreational experiences at the ski area that otherwise would not be possible. In order to continue to provide this experience, the future and economic viability of the ski area, as well as safety to the public, is of concern to the Forest Service.

The focus of the request from White Pass Company is on improving the quality of terrain necessary for increased safety and more enjoyable skiing experience through improvements to parking, access, and circulation and dispersal of skiers on the slopes; through responsiveness to the market demand for more novice and advanced intermediate terrain; by expanding facilities to accommodate the increasing number of skiers; and by improving early season skiing. The need for action is elaborated on in the following sections.

There is a need for improved parking, pedestrian access and traffic flow on US 12.

Approximately one half of the parking capacity at White Pass is located along US 12, a major US highway. White Pass guests who park along the highway must walk along the highway to access the ski area facilities. The mix of cars and pedestrians along the US highway creates the potential for conflicts between traffic and cars/pedestrians. The parking lots at White Pass are located to the north of US 12, while the ski area facilities are south of the highway. White Pass guests who park in the parking lots must cross the highway to access the ski area, which exacerbates the potential conflict.

White Pass currently has one portal, where guests arriving from the parking areas purchase lift tickets and access the lifts. During the morning arrival period, the base area becomes overcrowded, particularly on weekends and holidays.

There is a need for increased safety on the ski slopes.

Improved Circulation and Dispersal

The terrain at White Pass is generally characterized as low intermediate to intermediate on both the lower mountain and the upper mountain. However, the middle mountain is bisected by a steep cliff-band, which is passable to expert skiers only. As a result, the cliff-band separates the low to moderate level terrain, causing poor circulation for all but expert skiers who can negotiate the cliffband. In order to address this circulation issue, White Pass Company has developed the existing Holiday trail, which allows intermediate level and higher skiers to traverse around the cliff-band. Similarly, the existing Cascade trail provides a cat track for intermediate and higher level skiers to descend from the upper mountain to the

lower mountain. The Main Street cat track provides a cat track that is mostly intermediate level, but contains an expert level pitch across the cliff band.

While these cat tracks allow non-expert skiers to negotiate the cliffline, the majority of skiers at White Pass (i.e., novice to intermediate skiers) are required to negotiate the long traverses over the cliffline, resulting in unacceptably high skier densities on these trails. In addition, expert trails such as Hourglass, Cascade Cliff and Waterfall cross over these cat tracks. At these intersections, skiers of all ability levels may be found in unacceptably high densities, particularly during the mid-day lunch time and afternoon closing time. This situation results in skier conflicts and potential safety concerns along these trails.

There is a need for improvement of terrain, facilities, and the recreational experience of the White Pass skier in response to the increasing demand.

Match to Market Demand – Novice and Advanced Intermediate Terrain

As shown in Illustration 1-1 and Table 1-1, White Pass exhibits a deficit of terrain for novice and advanced intermediate skiers when compared to the normal “bell curve” exhibited by the skier market. There is sufficient novice terrain to provide for 1 percent of the White Pass capacity while the skier market reflects 15 percent as the desired percentage for novice skiers (refer to Appendix B). In addition, White Pass currently exhibits advanced intermediate terrain to support 3 percent of its capacity, yet the skier market indicates that 15 percent of the skiers demand terrain of this ability level (refer to Appendix B). This shortage of novice and advanced intermediate terrain compels skiers of this ability level to ski on terrain that is below their skill level, or to negotiate terrain that is too advanced for their skill level. Because of this, there is a need to increase the proportion of both novice and advanced intermediate terrain at White Pass.

Expanded Facilities to Meet Increased Demand

Prior to 1998, White Pass exhibited visitation ranging from 80,000 to 90,000 annual visits (PNSAA 2004). During the 1997-98 ski season, White Pass exhibited over 103,000 visits. Since that time, annual visitation has been increasing, as demonstrated by the 10-year average of 108,620 annual visits and a 5-year average of 109,782 visits (PNSAA 2006a). Illustration 1-2 presents the growth in annual visitation at White Pass between the 1994-95 season and the 2005-06 season. The steady growth in demand for alpine skiing at White Pass has resulted in larger crowds, longer lift line wait times, and more crowded slope conditions. With an existing CCC of 2,670, White Pass has observed an increase in the number of days at or near capacity, as is shown in Illustration 1-3. In response to the growth in business, during the summer of 2003, White Pass expanded the capacity of the day lodge by 180 seats in an effort to meet the current demand.

With national visitation on the rise after a relatively flat period during the 1990s, and with the Pacific Northwest meeting or exceeding visitation records in the early 2000s (PNSAA 2004; NSAA 2004, 2006),

continued growth in demand for skiing at White Pass is expected. Because the current ski area facilities have become overcrowded on peak days (i.e., weekends and holidays), White Pass has a need for additional facilities to better serve the current and anticipated growth in demand.

Improved Early Season Skiing

From mid-November through mid-January, snow cover on the key novice to advanced terrain at White Pass is often limited, particularly below the 5,000-foot elevation during normal conditions and at all elevations in low snow years. Egress capacity from the base of the *Paradise* chairlift can be restricted by low snowfall due to the lower elevation of the Main Street egress. The inability to provide adequate, skiable access to base area facilities during the early portion of the ski season limits the ability of White Pass to open during times when the upper mountain has sufficient snow, typically by Thanksgiving. When the lower terrain does open, snow cover remains comparatively low, which reduces the recreational experience of the White Pass skier.

There is a need for full integration of current Nordic and snowshoe operations into the MDP and SUP.

In 1984, the White Pass SUP was amended to include Nordic operations on a conceptual trail system, defined on a hand-drawn map. In 1999, the *Zig Zag* Nordic Trail was constructed, but not included in the SUP. The field-fit trails have been located with Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment and the current SUP has been updated to include the location of all previously-authorized Nordic trails (refer to Figure 1-3). The current SUP and Master Plan do not include the *Zig Zag* trail.²

Beginning in the year 2000, White Pass has offered a system of snowshoe trails in the vicinity of the Nordic trail system. The snowshoe trails consist of tree markers with no disturbance to vegetation or soils. The current SUP and Master Plan do not include the snowshoe trail system.³

ALTERNATIVES

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative (refer to Figure 2-1), White Pass would continue to operate the existing five lifts. Crowding on existing ski trails would continue to detract from the skier experience. White Pass would continue to exhibit a surplus of low-intermediate and intermediate terrain, and a deficit of novice and advanced-intermediate terrain. The capacity limitation placed on White Pass due to the limited

² The DEIS describes that under all Action Alternatives, the continued operation of the existing *Zig Zag* Nordic Trail would be authorized under the SUP. Under the FEIS, this trail authorization component has been removed from all alternatives, and will not be part of this NEPA decision. Refer to Chapter II, Section 2.2.2.6 for further discussion.

³ The DEIS describes that under all Action Alternatives, the continued operation of the existing snowshoe trails would be authorized under the SUP. Under the FEIS, this trail authorization component has been removed from all alternatives, and will not be part of this NEPA decision. Refer to Chapter II, Section 2.2.2.6 for further discussion.

availability of parking, coupled with continued deficiencies in the ski area crowding and diminished experience, could eventually lead to an erosion of market share for White Pass as well as safety concerns.

Action Alternatives Considered in the FEIS

All Action Alternatives would include the approval by the Forest Service of a new MDP to be submitted by White Pass Ski Company based on the analysis in this EIS and the final Record of Decision. In addition, a site-specific amendment of the GPNF Plan would be required for the Action Alternatives to allow for the crossing of riparian influence areas by ski runs or trails (refer Section 2.3.1).

Alternative 2 (the Proposed Action, refer to Volume 2 Figure 2-2) would replace the existing White Pass MDP with a MDP proposal submitted to the Forest Service by the White Pass Ski Company. Site-specific implementation of the proposal by the White Pass Ski Company would expand the existing SUP Area into the Hogback Basin through the construction two new chairlifts and a mid-mountain lodge. The Proposed Action would expand the SUP boundary an additional 767 acres for a total of approximately 1,572 acres.

Modified Alternative 4 (refer to Volume 2, Figure 2-4) was developed to address issues associated with riparian areas, terrain distribution, terrain safety, off-piste skiing terrain, and visual effects to the PCNST, while addressing the Purpose and Need in a manner similar to the Proposed Action. Modified Alternative 4 was developed from Draft EIS Alternative 4 as a response to recommendations provided by the public, after publication of the Draft EIS. Like Alternative 2, Modified Alternative 4 would include the development of two lifts and associated trails in the expansion area (refer to Figure 2-4). Under Modified Alternative 4, the CCC at White Pass would increase from 2,670 to 3,800. Ski terrain at White Pass would increase from 37 trails on 212.3 acres to 55 trails on 297.6 acres. Modified Alternative 4 would require an amendment of the GPNF Plan to allow for the crossing of riparian influence areas by ski trails (refer to Section 2.3.1.1).

Alternative 6 (refer to Volume 2, Figure 2-6) was developed to address issues associated with riparian areas in Hogback Basin, terrain distribution, and land designation (the White Pass Inventoried Roadless Area). Alternative 6 would address the Purpose and Need by including the development of one lift and associated trails in the expansion area. It includes the addition of a single chairlift, the *Basin* chairlift, and associated ski trails, similar to the Chair 6 development in Alternative 2, and 0.25 miles of new road construction within the proposed expansion area. Under Alternative 6, the total SUP expansion area would be 282 acres, leaving a substantial portion of Hogback Basin undeveloped. This alternative also includes the parking lot and ticket booth described above under DEIS Alternative 4.

Alternative 9 (refer to Volume 2, Figure 2-8) was developed to address issues associated with dispersed recreation, terrain distribution, visual quality and land designation (the White Pass Inventoried Roadless Area). Alternative 9 would address the Purpose and Need by including the development of one new lift,

the *PCT* Chair, and associated trails in the eastern portion of the existing SUP area. No expansion into the Hogback Basin would occur under this alternative. A 2.5 acre parking area and ticket booth would be constructed as described under DEIS Alternative 4, but a larger mid-mountain lodge, compared to Alternatives 2 and 4, would be constructed within the existing SUP area. No expansion of the SUP area would occur under this Alternative.

Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Detailed Study

A total of nine additional alternatives were considered but not carried forward for full analysis for the reasons described in Section 2.2 of the FEIS. These include the following:

Alternative 3 was formulated to respond to issues relating to the overall size and scope of the expansion (i.e., Water and Watershed Resources and Visual Resources) as well as terrain distribution and recreation. Alternative 3 would partially address the Purpose and Need through expansion of the SUP area by approximately 767 acres and the installation of one chairlift in Pigtail Basin, which would provide additional terrain at higher elevations. A mid-mountain lodge was not considered under Alternative 3. Alternative 3 would also include development of a Nordic trail system, including a warming hut along Hogback Ridge, in order to provide additional winter recreation opportunities in Hogback Basin without development of a ski lift or alpine ski trails.

Alternative 4 was initially presented in the DEIS as a considered alternative; however, Alternative 4 was modified following the public comment period for the DEIS (refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 3 for further details on Modified Alternative 4). As a result, the original Alternative 4 was subsequently eliminated from consideration and the rationale behind this elimination is detailed below. Initially Alternative 4 was developed to address issues associated with riparian areas, terrain distribution and visual effects to the PCNST, while addressing the Purpose and Need in a manner similar to the Proposed Action. Alternative 4 would include the development of two lifts and associated trails in the expansion area. Under Alternative 4, the CCC at White Pass would increase from 2,670 to 4,100. Ski terrain at White Pass would have increased from 37 trails on 212.3 acres to 54 trails on 286.1 acres. Alternative 4 would have required an amendment of the GPNF Plan to allow for the crossing of riparian influence areas by ski trails and other related facilities.

Alternative 5 was developed to evaluate the potential to meet the Purpose and Need (e.g., additional terrain, better match to market demand, more terrain at higher elevations) by containing developing within the existing SUP area. Alternative 5 would include the development of a new chairlift and two trails in the western portion of the SUP area, to the north of the existing *Paradise* lift. In the eastern portion of the SUP area, a new chairlift would be constructed with a series of new trails that take advantage of available terrain in the eastern portion of the SUP area. It would include significant re-contouring along the cliffline and Cascade traverse in order to reduce slope gradients along the cliffline. In addition, a 2.5-acre parking lot would be developed below the bottom terminal of the Lower Cascade

lift and the new lift. This parking lot would include a ticket booth and restroom, which would provide a second arrival portal for White Pass guests. Alternative 5 would also include a 2-story mountain-top lodge, with a building footprint of approximately 3,000 square feet.

Alternative 7 was developed in order to provide for development of two lifts in the expansion area, Alternative 7 would include lift and trail development similar to the Proposed Action, addressing the Purpose and Need in a manner similar to the Proposed Action, while minimizing impacts on riparian resources and enhancing skier circulation. Revisions to the Proposed Action include alternative routing of the access and egress trails to avoid wetland areas, narrower and/or slightly revised ski trails to minimize impacts on riparian areas, along with restrictions on the building envelope of bottom terminal sites to avoid wetlands and riparian areas. A mid-mountain lodge would be included, similar to the Proposed Action. However, water would be supplied to the lodge in a buried waterline, with aerial crossings over streams, in order to reduce the number of trips to the lodge by snowcat.

Alternative 8 was developed to evaluate an alternative that would address the issues by providing for a reduced expansion, coupled with development in the existing SUP area. This alternative would address the Purpose and Need by providing additional terrain that is higher on the mountain, and by enhancing the terrain at White Pass to meet market demand. Alternative 8 would include the *Basin* lift, a bottom-drive, fixed grip quad chairlift, as described for the Proposed Action (refer to Section 1.1.2 – Purpose of and Need for Action). The lift and associated trails would be constructed in Pigtail Basin, with no development in Hogback Basin. Alternative 8 would also include the development of a new chairlift and two trails in the western portion of the SUP area, as described for Alternative 5. As in Alternative 5, development of this lift would require re-contouring of the area between elevation 5,750 feet and 5,925 feet, as well as the egress trails, in order to reduce slope gradients.

Alternative 10 would leave Pigtail and Hogback Basins undeveloped, but would address the Purpose and Need by providing additional alpine skiing through expanding into areas other than Hogback or Pigtail Basins. Expansion possibilities include Miriam Basin to the south, which was included in the 1979 White Pass Ski Area Master Plan, and the Twin Peaks area to the east.

Alternative 11 would use existing chairlifts for skier access to Pigtail Basin. At the summit, skiers would be transported to Hogback Ridge by snow-cat. Alternative 11 addresses the Purpose and Need by providing winter recreation opportunities in Pigtail and Hogback Basins for some alpine skiers, more backcountry skiers, and possibly groomed-track skiers.

Alternative 12 was developed to assess the realignment of the proposed chairlift in Pigtail Basin, described under Alternative 3 to avoid impacts to the PCNST. The top terminal of the lift would be developed below the PCNST, at elevation 5,950 feet. The bottom terminal would be at elevation 5,520 feet. The purpose of this alignment would be to provide a chairlift in Pigtail Basin that would not cross

the PCNST, while addressing the Purpose and Need by providing additional terrain that is higher on the mountain.

In response to public comments to the DEIS, Alternative 13 was developed to evaluate the use of more high speed lifts in the existing SUP area. Under Alternative 13, no new lift alignments or terrain would be developed. The *Pigtail*, *Lower Cascade*, and *Paradise* lifts would be replaced by high speed, detachable quads, increasing the CCC to 3,350. Alternative 13 provides upgraded lifts and increases the capacity of the mountain without any new development of lifts or terrain.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Comparison of Alternatives

**Table ES-1:
Comparison of Facilities by Alternative**

Project Components	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Modified Alternative 4	Alternative 6	Alternative 9
SUP area (acres)	805 ^a	1,572	1,572	1087	805
Ski Area Capacity (CCC)	2,670	4,250	3,800	3,640	3,280
Lifts					
Total Number of Lifts	5	7	7	6	6
Ski Terrain					
Beginner (acres)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.9
Novice (acres)	1.4	1.4	22.7	1.4	35.8
Low Intermediate (acres)	67.7	95.1	94.6	96.5	58.9
Intermediate (acres)	80.9	80.9	59.7	80.9	85.6
Advanced Intermediate (acres)	10.0	52.6	68.5	10.0	25.7
Expert (acres)	51.7	51.7	51.7	51.7	51.7
Total (acres)	212.3	282.3	297.6	241.1	259.7
Number of Trails	37	52	55	44	44
Nordic System					
Total Length of Nordic Trail Network (km)	13.64	11.55	11.55	11.55	11.55
Zig Zag Nordic Trail	<i>Zig Zag</i> trail not included in this MDP and USFS would no longer authorize after 2007, without adequate site-specific NEPA.				
Snowshoe Trails	Snowshoe trails not included in this MDP and USFS would no longer authorize after 2007, without adequate site-specific NEPA.				
Facilities					
New Lodge	No	Yes mid-mountain Hogback Basin	Yes mid-mountain Hogback Basin	Yes mid mountain along Quail trail	Yes mountain-top Pigtail Peak
Size of Footprint (sq. ft.)	N/A	2,000	2,000	2,000	3,000

**Table ES-1:
Comparison of Facilities by Alternative**

Project Components	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Modified Alternative 4	Alternative 6	Alternative 9
Amenities Provided	Food, Restrooms	Food, Restrooms	Food, Restrooms	Food, Restrooms	Food, Restrooms
ADA Accessible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Ticket Booth	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Parking Lot	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail	Trail would remain in current location	Trail would remain in current location	2,000 feet of the trail would be re-routed to Wilderness boundary	Trail would remain in current location	Realignment of 225 feet of trail

^a The current Special Use Permit indicates that the permit area is 710 acres. However, GIS analysis indicates that the actual SUP area is approximately 805 acres. As a result of the NEPA process, of which this FEIS is a part, the acreage has been recalculated based on the best available data.

**Table ES-2:
Comparison of Environmental Consequences by Alternative**

Project Components	Alt. 1 (Existing)	Alt. 2 (Impacts)	Modified Alt. 4 (Impacts)	Alt. 6 (Impacts)	Alt. 9 (Impacts)	EIS References
Climate and Snow (refer to Section 3.1)						
Avalanche Control	As needed along the cliffband	Increased on an as-needed basis	Increased on an as-needed basis	Increased on an as-needed basis	No Change	Section 3.1.3.2
Potential Dispersal of Backcountry Skiers to High Avalanche Hazard Areas	No	Yes	Yes	Partial-portions of the Hogback Basin would remain open	No	
Geology and Soils (refer to Section 3.2)						
Grading Impacts (acres)	0.0	+4.8	+19.6	+5.6	+11.9	Table 3.2-4
Total Graded Area (acres)	45.1 (existing)	49.9	64.7	50.7	57.0	Table 3.2-1 and Table 3.2-4
Impervious Surface Impacts (acres)	0.0	+0.1	+8.1	+4.5	+10.7	Table 3.2-3
Total Impervious Surfaces (acres)	35.9	36.0	44.0	40.4	46.6	

**Table ES-2:
Comparison of Environmental Consequences by Alternative**

Project Components	Alt. 1 (Existing)	Alt. 2 (Impacts)	Modified Alt. 4 (Impacts)	Alt. 6 (Impacts)	Alt. 9 (Impacts)	EIS References
Detrimental Soil Condition Impacts (acres)	0.0	+0.1	+8.1	+4.5	+10.7	
Total Detrimental Soil Conditions (acres)	45.11	45.2	53.2	49.6	55.8	
% of White Pass Study Area with Detrimental Soil Conditions	2.9%	2.9%	3.4%	3.2%	3.6%	
Water and Watershed (refer to Section 3.3)						
Number of Stream Crossings						
Aerial Utility	0	+11	+11	0	0	Tables 3.3-2, 3.3-10 and 3.3-11
Culverts	18	+1	+11	+4	+11	
Fords	10	+0	+0	+0	+0	
Bridges	0	0	+1	0	+4	
Total Stream Crossings	28	40	51	32	43	
Streams Stability Impacts (miles)	0.0	+0.1	+0.5	+0.2	+0.6	Tables 3.3-6 and 3.3-12
Total Unstable Streambanks (miles)	1.5	1.6	2.0	1.7	2.1	
Wetland Impacts (acres)	2.3	+0.1	+0.1	+0.1	+0.1	Tables 3.3-3 and 3.3-13
Total Wetland Impacts (acres)	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	
Riparian Reserve Impacts(acres)	0.0	+17.7	+25.8	+12.6	+24.4	Table 3.3-14
Riparian Influence Area Impacts (acres)	0.0	+2.6	+5.9	+1.4	+11.0	Table 3.3-16
Fisheries (refer to Section 3.4)						
Fish Presence	None	None	None	None	None	Section 3.4.2
Impacts to Habitat	None	None	None	None	None	Section 3.4.3

**Table ES-2:
Comparison of Environmental Consequences by Alternative**

Project Components	Alt. 1 (Existing)	Alt. 2 (Impacts)	Modified Alt. 4 (Impacts)	Alt. 6 (Impacts)	Alt. 9 (Impacts)	EIS References
Vegetation (refer to Section 3.5)						
Vegetation Community Impacts (acres)	0.0	+19.7	+44.7	+15.3	+38.9	Table 3.5-5
Wildlife (refer to Section 3.6)						
Riparian Reserves Impacts (acres)	0.0	+17.7	+25.8	+12.6	+24.4	Table 3.6-7
Landcover Types within Riparian Reserves						
Impacts to Forested RR (acres)	0.0	+19.1	+24.8	+12.6	+24.3	Table 3.6-7
Total Forested RR (acres)	522.7	503.6	497.9	510.1	498.3	
Impacts to Modified Herbaceous (acres)	0.0	0	+1.3	0	0	Table 3.6-7
Total Modified Herbaceous (acres)	67.5	67.5	66.2	67.5	67.5	
ACS (refer to Section 3.7)						
Refer to Table 3.7-3 for summary of Riparian Reserve Standards and Guidelines						
Air Quality (refer to Section 3.8)						
Exceed 24-hr. PM _{2.5} Standard?	No	No	No	No	No	Section 3.8.2
Exceed 24-hr. PM ₁₀ Standard?	No	No	No	No	No	
Exceed 1-hr. CO Standard?	No	No	No	No	No	
Heritage Resources (refer to Section 3.9)						
NRHP Eligible Heritage Resources affected?	No	No	No	No	No	Section 3.9.6.2
Non-eligible Heritage Resources affected?	No	No	No	No	No	

**Table ES-2:
Comparison of Environmental Consequences by Alternative**

Project Components	Alt. 1 (Existing)	Alt. 2 (Impacts)	Modified Alt. 4 (Impacts)	Alt. 6 (Impacts)	Alt. 9 (Impacts)	EIS References
NRHP Eligible Traditional Cultural Heritage Resources affected?	No	No	No	No	No	
Non-eligible Traditional Cultural Heritage Resources affected?	No	No	No	No	No	
Social Economics (refer to Section 3.10)						
Environmental Justice	No disproportionate effects to minority or low income populations					Section 3.10.3.1
Employment						
Full Time	18	+2	+2	+1	+1	Table 3.10-6
Seasonal	144	+24	+20	+18	+12	
Total	162	188	184	181	175	
Recreation (refer to Section 3.11)						
CCC	2,670	4,250	3,800	3,640	3,280	Section 3.11.3.1
Number of Lifts	5	7	7	6	6	Section 3.11.3.2
Number of Trails	37	52	55	44	44	
Nordic Trails (km)	13.64	11.55	11.55	11.55	11.55	Section 3.11.3.4
Visits in Year 1	109,782	149,782	149,782	123,782	115,782	Table 3.11-4
Visits in Year 5	115,382	157,422	157,422	130,096	121,688	
Visits in Year 10	121,268	165,453	165,453	136,732	127,895	
PCNST	No Change	Chairlift over the PCNST would cause a break in experience	PCNST Re-route in view of Chairlift Terminal	Chairlift over the PCNST would cause a break in the experience	PCNST re-alignment outside of ski trail in existing SUP Area	Section 3.11.3.6

**Table ES-2:
Comparison of Environmental Consequences by Alternative**

Project Components	Alt. 1 (Existing)	Alt. 2 (Impacts)	Modified Alt. 4 (Impacts)	Alt. 6 (Impacts)	Alt. 9 (Impacts)	EIS References
Transportation (refer to Section 3.12)						
Parking (visitors/ vehicles)	2,890 / 1,109	4,250 / 1,700	3,800 / 1,505	3,640 / 1,435	3,280 / 1,279	Table 3.12- FEIS1
Unpaved Road Length (miles)	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.55	6.2	Tables 3.12-1 and 3.12-2
Paved Road Length (miles)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	
Total Road Length (miles)	6.7	6.7	6.7	7.05	6.7	
Road Density (mi/sqmi)	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.87	2.7	
US. 12 LOS	LOS B	LOS C	LOS C	LOS C	LOS C	Section 3.12.3
Utilities (refer to Section 3.13)						
Power (kW)	Transformer: 2,970; Lines: 1,550	4,000	4,000	3,500	3,500	Sections 3.13.2.3 and 3.13.3
Peak Water Demand (gallons/day)	12,561	23,001	20,566	19,700	17,751	Table 3.13-3
Wastewater	Existing Treatment facility; design capacity 12,000 GPD	Mid-Mountain Treatment facility and drainfield; at base area possible equalization and/or drainfield	Mid-Mountain Treatment facility and drainfield; at base area possible equalization and/or drainfield.	Existing Treatment facility with Holding Tanks; at base area, possible equalization and/or drainfield.	Existing Treatment facility with Holding Tanks; at base area, possible equalization and/or drainfield.	Sections 3.13.2.6 and 3.13.3
New Structures	None	Mid Mountain Lodge	Mid Mountain Lodge and Ticket Booth	Mid Mountain Lodge and Ticket Booth	Mountain Top Lodge and Ticket Booth	Section 3.13.3

**Table ES-2:
Comparison of Environmental Consequences by Alternative**

Project Components	Alt. 1 (Existing)	Alt. 2 (Impacts)	Modified Alt. 4 (Impacts)	Alt. 6 (Impacts)	Alt. 9 (Impacts)	EIS References
Inventoried Roadless Areas (refer to Section 3.14)						
Inventoried Roadless Areas	No Change	Development within 767 acres of the White Pass IRA would disqualify this portion of the IRA from placement on the inventory of potential wilderness areas.	Development within 767 acres of the White Pass IRA would disqualify this portion of the IRA from placement on the inventory of potential wilderness areas	Development within 282 acres of the White Pass IRA would disqualify this portion of the IRA from placement on the inventory of potential wilderness areas.	The portion of the Goat Rocks Adjacent IRA within the SUP area no longer qualifies for placement on the inventory of potential wilderness areas. Further development would have no effect.	Section 3.14
Visual Resources (refer to Section 3.15)						
VQO/SIL						
Viewpoint #1	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Section 3.15.3
Viewpoint #2	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	
Viewpoint #3	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	
Viewpoint #5	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	
Viewpoint #6	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	
Viewpoint #7	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	Retention/High	
Noise (refer to Section 3.16)						
Maximum Noise Levels during construction at a distance of 50 feet	N/A	93 dBA	93 dBA	93 dBA	93 dBA	Section 3.16.2

**Table ES-2:
Comparison of Environmental Consequences by Alternative**

Project Components	Alt. 1 (Existing)	Alt. 2 (Impacts)	Modified Alt. 4 (Impacts)	Alt. 6 (Impacts)	Alt. 9 (Impacts)	EIS References
Effect of Operations	Similar to operations today (Year 2007).	Similar to operations today (Year 2007) with a slight increase in noise due to increased traffic and facilities.	Similar to operations today (Year 2007) with a slight increase in noise due to increased traffic and facilities.	Similar to operations today (Year 2007) with a slight increase in noise due to increased traffic and facilities.	Similar to operations today (Year 2007) with a slight increase in noise due to increased traffic and facilities.	

Note: Totals may vary due to rounding

DECISION FACTORS

In evaluating and deciding upon White Pass Ski Company's proposal and the alternatives to that proposal, the USFS is required to ensure that the selected alternative is consistent with management direction for the project area. In addition, other factors that will be used in making the decision include the responsiveness of the selected alternative to the Purpose and Need, described in Section 2.0 above, and the degree to which it addresses the significant issues. Issues of particular relevance to this decision are:

Terrain Distribution

The terrain in the proposed expansion area includes low intermediate level terrain to advanced-intermediate level terrain, while low intermediate terrain is already in abundance at White Pass. The proposed development has the potential to increase the amount of low-intermediate terrain. The decision would consider the facility design within the expansion area to provide a better terrain distribution and more closely match the market demand.

Soil Compaction

The operation of heavy machinery for the construction of chairlifts, trails, the lodge, and associated infrastructure has the potential to compact soils, particularly with no roads proposed for equipment travelways. The decision would take into consideration how well the potential impacts to soils, would be controlled.

Water and Watershed Resources

The proposed development has the potential to affect the amount and function of Riparian Reserves within the existing and proposed SUP areas. *The Proposed Action has the potential to impact wetland, stream channel and floodplain characteristics, as well as water yield and quality in a Tier II Key*

Watershed. The decision would take into consideration how well the potential impacts to wetland, stream channel and floodplain characteristics, as well as to water yield and quality in a Tier II Key Watershed, would be controlled.

Heritage

The proposed development has the potential to affect heritage resources, including the Cascade Crest Trail, Traditional Cultural Properties and treaty rights and resources.

The decision would consider the design features or mitigation measures that adequately address heritage resource concerns and the extent to which these meet cultural and spiritual values that are important to tribes.

Recreation

The Proposed Action has the potential to negatively affect the existing dispersed recreation use in Hogback and Pigtail Basins and to increase the cumulative loss of backcountry recreation terrain in the southern Cascades of Washington State.

The proposed development has the potential to cause a break in experience for PCNST users due to the placement of lifts and trails near, or across the PCNST.

The Proposed Action could provide easier access to un-patrolled areas with a higher avalanche potential than Hogback or Pigtail Basins.

The decision would consider the degree to which the PCNST experience is maintained through the proposed expansion area. The decision would consider the facility design within the expansion area to avoid and/or reduce the *break in experience for PCNST users*. The decision would consider whether there are design features or mitigation measures that adequately address backcountry safety.

Visual Resources

The Proposed Action has the potential to affect the scenic quality of the White Pass area, including Hogback Basin, from key vantage points, including the PCNST and US 12. The decision would consider how well scenic quality is maintained by the developments, as viewed from these key areas.

Social and Economic Factors

The proposed ski area expansion must be an economically viable project that responds to public demand. (Decision Factor)

The Proposed Action has the potential to negatively affect the economics of nearby communities if the expansion is not financially successful.

The decision would consider the ski area and nearby communities economics in combination with how well the development responds to public demand.

Inventoried Roadless Areas

The Proposed Action has the potential to affect the roadless character of the White Pass Inventoried Roadless Area.

The Proposed Action has the potential to affect use of Miriam Basin in the Goat Rocks Wilderness, adjacent to the White Pass Ski Area.

Standards and Guidelines in the 1990 GPNF Land and Resource Management Plan do not allow development of new, or expansion of existing “recreation sites” in the Riparian Influence Area (RIA), and the plan specifies that development of such facilities “should” be no closer than 100 feet from streams, ponds, wet meadows, marshes and springs. The Proposed Action would place ski lifts, trails and other ski area infrastructure within the RIA.

On the other hand, the Washington Wilderness Act of 1984 set the context for possible ski area development within Hogback Basin by withdrawing 800 acres of the basin from the Goat Rocks Wilderness for further study as to its alpine skiing potential. The extent to which the selected alternative balances this context with sensitivity to the roadless character of Hogback Basin will be a factor in the decision. The decision would consider the potential to affect use of Miriam Basin in the Goat Rocks Wilderness and consider the facility design within the expansion area to provide better avoidance and/or minimization of Riparian Reserve impacts.

Parking and Pedestrian Access

At peak times, parking at the White Pass Ski Area is congested and White Pass guests must walk along or across US 12 to access the ski area facilities. The Proposed Action has the potential to exceed the parking capacity at White Pass and to exacerbate the potential for conflicts between pedestrians and highway traffic on US 12. The decision will consider how well the parking capacity at White Pass is addressed and resolved, and the extent to which the potential for conflicts between pedestrians and highway traffic on US 12 is reduced.

MITIGATION/DESIGN CRITERIA

The Proposed Action and alternatives include Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions, monitoring requirements, and conditions established by other agencies

have been established in order to minimize adverse effects. Mitigation measures intended to avoid, minimize, rectify, and reduce or eliminate potential negative impacts associated with the proposed projects are summarized in Table 2.4-2. These Mitigation Measures are an integral part of each of the Action Alternatives. In many cases, Mitigation Measures include design criteria that are intended to avoid an impact altogether. Table 2.4-3 lists other Management Requirements, which would be implemented as a requirement of law, regulation, or policy. Table 2.4-4 presents Other Management Provisions that would be implemented *to protect resources* during construction, operations, and maintenance of the ski area facilities, but which are not intended *to mitigate effects to resources*.

Examples of these measures include the use of low-impact construction techniques, including over-the-snow access and helicopters, and the development of a Travel Route Plan, which would limit the number of trips in the same travel corridor for construction equipment. In addition, all forest clearing would include lop and scatter techniques, particularly in Riparian Reserves, with no timber removed from the site. Vegetation less than three feet tall would be retained in any wetlands to be modified for development of ski area facilities. Utility crossings over streams and wetlands would require low elevation aerial crossings, as opposed to trenching.

A Boundary Management Plan would be developed to manage skier use of Miriam Basin (i.e., exiting White Pass). Also, PCNST users would be informed of construction activities to minimize the break in experience along the trail.

Visual impacts would be reduced by scalloping and feathering any tree removal corridors associated with ski lifts or trails. Along US 12, vegetation would be retained between the highway and the parking lot (Modified Alternative 4, Alternatives 6 and 9) in order to screen the parking lot from view. In addition, ski area facilities would be designed to blend with the landscape, including the use of color for chairlifts, and Cascadian Architecture for the mid-mountain lodge.

MONITORING

Monitoring of all construction activities would be carried out according to the construction plan, which would be developed by White Pass and approved by the Forest Service and other involved agencies (e.g., NPDES, Clean Water Act) prior to implementation. The construction plan would include a monitoring plan designed to demonstrate that monitoring of impacts would be based upon and consistent with monitoring guidelines presented in the *Forest Plan*, as Amended. The objectives of the plan would be to monitor the implementation of Mitigation Measures, Management Requirements, and Other Management Provisions, effectiveness of management practices, and validation of the impact analysis.

The construction plan would also include a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which would include monitoring of onsite best management practices (e.g., erosion control practices) and evaluation of water quality above and below the project area during and after prescribed rain events.