

Forest Service Manual 2343 Screening – Additional Seasonal and Year-Round Recreation at Ski Areas

Introduction

The following table provides a template for describing proposed activities and how they comply with Forest Service direction regarding the appropriateness of additional seasonal and year-round activities at ski areas permitted on National Forest System (NFS) lands.

The screening process for determining compliance with Forest Service Manual ([FSM](#)) direction occurs at three separate stages of planning:

- (1) Master Development Planning – review of long-term, resort-wide plans for development.
- (2) NEPA Analysis – environmental analysis of site-specific proposed activities at the resort.
- (3) Post-Decision Engineering and Design Reviews – review of design documents that disclose final facility layouts and architectural design details.

As project activity details develop through these progressive planning phases, additional activity information is often necessary to ensure compliance with agency direction.

A final determination for compliance with FSM 2343 direction will be made after the third and final review stage when the agency can fully evaluate final project details. The agency will utilize the Scenery Management System, Built Environment Image Guide, the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, and other design and engineering reviews to ensure that these additional seasonal or year-round recreation activities and associated facilities are located and constructed to harmonize with the surrounding natural environment and meet agency direction.

Master Development Planning

Ski area Master Development Plans (MDPs) guide the placement and design of additional seasonal or year-round recreation activities. As part of the master development planning process, the following criteria must be met:

FSM Direction	Criteria	Findings
2343.14 (8)(a)	Establish zones to guide placement and design of additional seasonal or year-round recreation facilities, basing the zones on the existing natural setting and level of development to support snow sports	
(8)(b)	Depict the general location of the facilities	
(8)(c)	Establish an estimated timeframe for their construction	

Proposed Activities and Associated Facilities

Apply the following additional criteria in initial screening of proposals for additional seasonal or year-round recreation activities and associated facilities. These activities and associated facilities must:

FSM Direction	Criteria	Findings
2343.14 (1)(a)	Not change the primary purpose of the ski area to other than snow sports	

FSM Direction	Criteria	Findings
(1)(b)	Encourage outdoor recreation and enjoyment of nature and provide natural resource-based recreation opportunities	
(1)(c)	To the extent practicable, be located within the portions of the ski area that are developed or that will be developed pursuant to the master development plan	
(1)(d)	Not exceed the level of development for snow sports and be consistent with the zoning established in the applicable master development plan	
(1)(e)(1)	To the extent practicable, harmonize with the natural environment of the site where they would be located by being visually consistent with or subordinate to the ski area's existing facilities, vegetation and landscape	
(1)(e)(2)	To the extent practicable, harmonize with the natural environment of the site where they would be located by not requiring significant modifications to topography to facilitate construction or operations	
(1)(f)	Not compromise snow sports operations or functions	
(1)(g)	Increase utilization of snow sports facilities and not require extensive new support facilities, such as parking lots, restaurants, and lifts	

Other factors

FSM Direction	Screening Criteria	Narrative
2343.14 (4)	The degree to which visitors are able to engage with the natural setting, the extent to which the activities and facilities could be expected to lead to exploration and enjoyment of other NFS lands	
(5)	Interdependence of the visitor's experience with attributes common in National Forest settings	
(6)	Allow temporary activities that rely on existing facilities, such as concerts or weddings, even if they are not necessarily interdependent with a National Forest setting, provided they are enhanced by it. Do not authorize new permanent facilities solely for these activities.	

(7)	Encourage holder to utilize existing facilities to provide additional seasonal or year-round recreation activities	
(9)	Utilize the Scenery Management System (FSM 2380), Built Environment Image Guide (Publication FS-710) and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (FSM 2310) to ensure that additional seasonal or year-round recreation activities and associated facilities are located and constructed to harmonize with the surrounding natural environment	
(10)	Authorization of additional seasonal or year-round recreation activities and associated facilities is subject to terms and conditions deemed appropriate by the Authorized Officer.	
(11)	The acreage necessary for additional seasonal or year-round recreation activities and associated facilities may not be considered in determining the acreage encompassed by a ski area permit. Permit area expansions must be based on needs related to snow sports rather than additional seasonal or year-round recreation	
(12)	Additional seasonal or year-round recreation activities and associated facilities that were authorized before November 7, 2011, and that do not meet the criteria in paragraphs 1 through 11 of FSM 2343.14 may continue to be authorized during the term of the current permit. When that permit terminates or is revoked, do not reauthorize additional seasonal or year-round recreation activities and associated facilities that do not conform to paragraphs 1 through 11 of this section.	