



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
GUNNISON FIELD OFFICE
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MAY - 3 2017

In Reply Refer to:
2930 (LLCOF07000)

Dear Interested Party:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Gunnison Field Office, has completed the environmental analysis of a proposal to exchange a portion of Silverton Guides' existing Special Recreation Permit (SRP) area used for heli-skiing operations near the Town of Silverton, Colorado with other nearby terrain. The EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

Based on the [Environmental Assessment for the Silverton Guides Helicopter Ski Terrain Exchange \(EA\)](#), the BLM has completed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and has issued a Decision Record. The EA, FONSI, and Decision Record are all available for review on the Gunnison Field Office's website at: <https://go.usa.gov/x586J>

Decision

Silverton Guides submitted an application to the BLM requesting to modify the lands within their existing SRP authorizing guided heli-skiing operations on BLM lands.

The BLM's decision is to implement the Proposed Action described in the Environmental Assessment for the Silverton Guides Helicopter Ski Terrain Exchange (DOI-BLM-CO-S060-2016-0022-EA), with these additions. Three additional project design criteria will be applied to the Proposed Action:

1. No use of explosives in the SRP area will be allowed after 9:00 a.m.
2. No use of explosives will be allowed at any time in the identified closure area in the Southeast Pod for the purposes of snow stability assessments related to heli-skiing.
3. No Landing Zones or skier drop-offs will be allowed in the identified closure area in the Southeast pod.

The Proposed Action, with the three additional project design criteria, will be implemented by the issuance of a new 5-year Special Recreation Permit (SRP) to Silverton Guides. The Proposed

Action includes the removal of five heli-skiing pods and addition of four to the heli-skiing SRP. Under the Proposed Action, Silverton Guides would no longer operate heli-skiing in the Grouse Gulch, Cinnamon, Houghton, Poughkeepsie, and Ross Basin pods (total area of 5,556 acres) and they would be removed from Silverton Guides' SRP. In exchange, the Illinois/Hancock, Southeast, Round, and Minnie/Maggie pods would be added to the SRP (16,252 acres) and utilized as heli-skiing terrain. Under the Proposed Action the SRP area would increase by 10,686 acres to a total 25,074 acres.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the referenced environmental assessment (EA), and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was prepared. The Proposed Action implemented by the decision will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not necessary. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the proposal as detailed in the FONSI.

Appeal Opportunities

This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer, and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) issues a stay (43 CFR 2931.8(b)). This decision may be appealed to the IBLA in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 4. Appeal and stay procedures are outlined in Form 1842-1, which is attached.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Gunnison Field Office NEPA Coordinator Marnie Medina by phone at (970) 642-4954, or by email at mmedina@blm.gov.

Sincerely,



Elijah Waters
Field Manager