



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Boulder  
Ranger District

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File Code: 3400

Date: March 16, 2007

Dear Neighbor,

The Boulder Ranger District of the Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests has received a proposal from Eldora Mountain Resort to initiate direct control efforts for the mountain pine beetle (MPB). These efforts are intended to manage the spread of MPB in concert with other public and private efforts and to protect key forest stands at Eldora. The project is described in detail in the attached document.

This project would initially affect 19.4 acres of National Forest System land, with other, complementary activity taking place on private land. If necessary, future MPB control efforts could take place on up to 180 more acres that have been identified. The project would involve removal of infested trees and spraying of susceptible trees. Forest Service authorization is required for the public land portion of this project. As a result, we are assessing the potential impacts in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) prior to deciding whether or not to grant the requested authorization.

We invite your comments regarding what environmental issues and concerns should be considered in our decision-making process. Your input will help determine the level of NEPA appropriate for the project. At this time, it is anticipated that a Categorical Exclusion will be prepared for this project.

The effects of tree removal, using similar techniques, have been well studied and documented in past environmental reviews at Eldora. These include NEPA documents and associated documentation prepared for the 1976 Master Development Plan, 1993 Cannonball Parallel chairlift, 1994 Master Development Plan, 1996 Windmill trail extension, 1998 Indian Peak pod development, 1999 Corona lift replacement, and the 2000 Corona Tower 7 Feeder Trail. Also, the Forest Service has assessed the impacts of similar, MPB direct control actions on other ski areas in the region, including Winter Park, in recent years.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about the proposal and to give you the opportunity to submit comments regarding the proposed project. If this project fits within the category of projects that may be excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment we anticipate using the following category for this project:



FSH 1909.15, 31.2, (14): Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction, including removal of infested/infected trees and adjacent live uninfested/uninfected trees as determined necessary to control the spread of insects or disease.

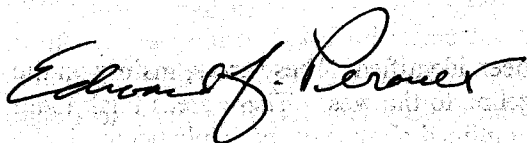
The decision to implement this project would not be subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service Handbook 36 CFR 215.4

We would like to receive all comments by April 9, 2007 so we may complete our analysis, and if possible, begin treatment prior to the MPB flight. Comments should be addressed to:

Eldora MPB Mitigation Project  
U. S. Forest Service  
3063 Sterling Circle, Suite 1  
Boulder, CO 80301

For further information on the project, please contact Laura B. Pramuk, Public Affairs Officer at [lbpramuk@fs.fed.us](mailto:lbpramuk@fs.fed.us), or (303) 245-6429. Thank you for your interest in the management of the Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests.

Sincerely,



*f* CHRISTINE M. WALSH  
District Ranger

## **PROPOSED MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE CONTROL EFFORTS ELDORA MOUNTAIN RESORT**

This notice describes Eldora Mountain Resort's proposal to initiate control efforts to combat mountain pine beetle (MPB). This project is intended to manage the MPB problem in concert with public and private efforts and to protect key forest stands. The project will be initiated in April 2007 and completed by July 2007. Depending on the success of this initial effort, additional treatments may be required in subsequent years.

### **PROPOSED ACTION**

Eldora proposes to:

- Fell infested trees by hand, removing those located within 250 feet of trail edges or roads by skidding them out over snow with a winch cat to minimize surface disturbance. Infested trees more than 250 feet from trail edges or roads will be felled, limbed, and peeled by hand and left in place. An estimated 592 trees would be felled in stands covering an area of 19.1 acres on National Forest System land in 2007. Removed trees would be disposed of on site (e.g., by chipping or burning in an air curtain burner to minimize air quality impacts) or hauled to a safe, off-forest location.
- Spray unaffected trees in critical areas that serve as tree screens or windbreaks. This will affect about 6 acres on National Forest System land in 2007, mainly at the tops of the Challenge, Indian Peaks and Corona lifts.
- Areas of potential future treatment have also been identified. These areas, mainly on the front side of the mountain and along the ridgeline to the west. These areas total about 180 acres. The same direct control measures outlined above will be implemented if the infestation spreads to these areas.

Other MPB control efforts will take place on private land. Total National Forest System land potentially affected by this proposal is 205 acres. No new road construction is anticipated.

### **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The rationale for the project centers on customer service -- on maintaining the ability of the ski area to provide a quality recreational experience. In more specific terms, we believe this proposal would:

- Enhance the skier experience at Eldora by preserving forest stands on the mountain and around the base area, on public as well as private land.
- Protect key forest stands at Eldora to maintain tree screens and wind breaks that improve visual quality and increase the comfort, safety, and consistency of lift operations and skiing.
- Help slow the beetle's advance onto the Front Range, particularly in the vicinity of Eldora, buying more time to plan how the epidemic will be managed. We recognize that we will probably not be able to eliminate the infestation, but we anticipate that we can

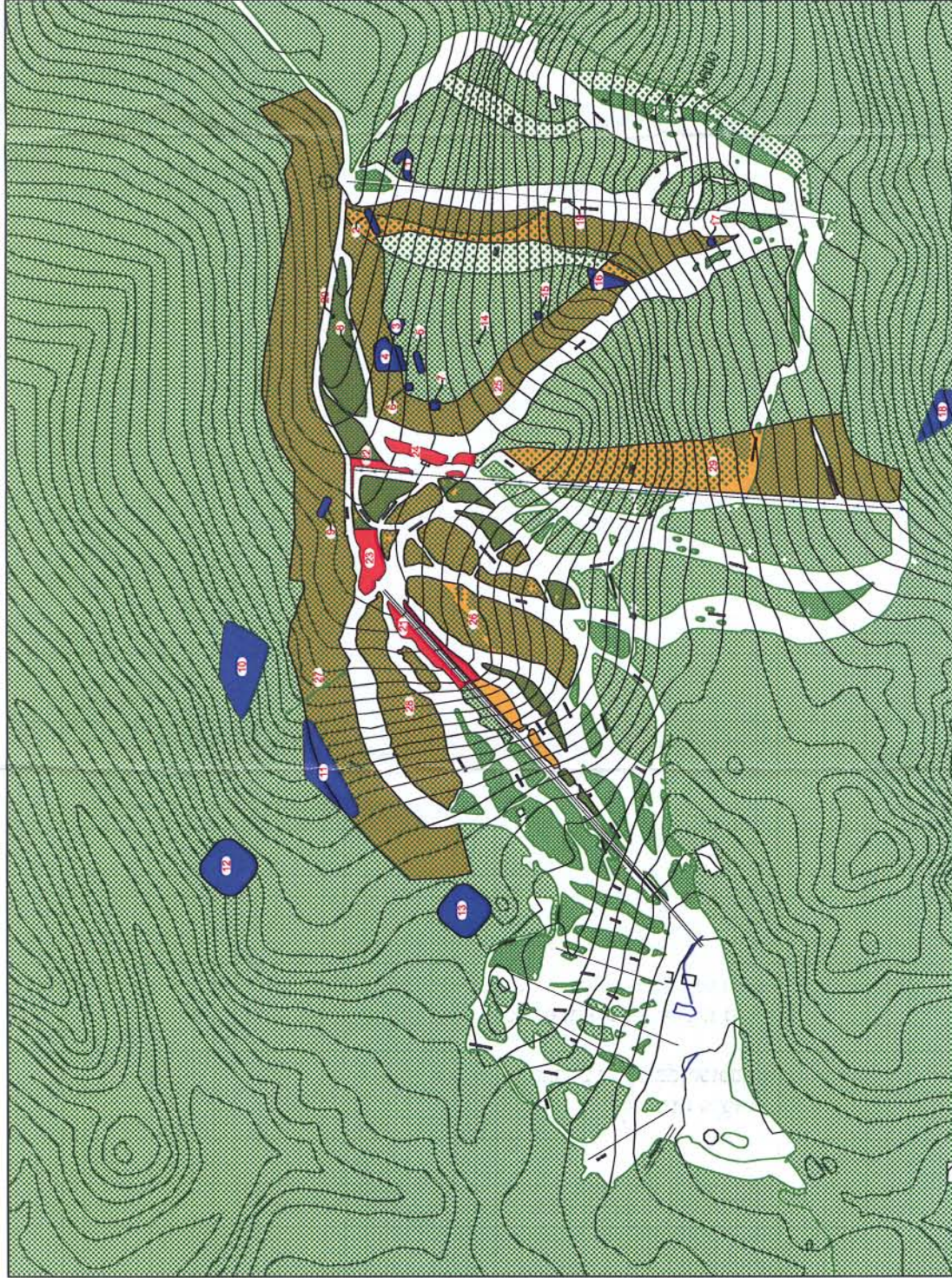
slow it to the point that management options can be better planned and implemented and therefore be more effective.

- Be consistent with the multi-agency, public and private effort to deal with the MPB on the Front Range that is currently being planned and implemented.

The MPB problem is rapidly spreading onto the Front Range, and it is important to address this problem quickly to limit its spread and its damage. Eldora hopes to initiate this project as soon as the ski area closes for the season in April.

A map is attached that shows the extent of MPB treatment at Eldora. BMPs and other standard mitigation measures will be in place to offset impacts in the areas of air quality, wildlife, vegetation, watershed resources, or other areas of possible concern.





**MPB SURVEY-DEC. 2006**

INFECTED AREAS	ACRES	# TREES AFFECTED
1	0.4694	34
2	0.27	4
3	0.28	29
4	1.23	86
5	0.21	3
6	0.08	9
7	0.14	36
8	0.03	7
9	0.21	9
10	4.43	42
11	3.28	75
12	3.31	100
13	2.85	18
14	0.01	2
15	0.08	18
16	0.81	23
17	0.09	12
18	1.62	89
19	0.02	12
20	0.01	2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>845404.6918</b>	<b>592</b>
	<b>19.4078 AC.</b>	
<b>PROPOSED SPRAYING TREATMENT</b>		
21	2.2 AC.	N/A
22	0.65 AC.	N/A
23	1.9 AC.	N/A
24	1.2 AC.	N/A
<b>FUTURE TREATMENT</b>		
25	39.2 AC.	N/A
26	36.6 AC.	N/A
27	63.9 AC.	N/A
28	12.6 AC.	N/A
29	27.3 AC.	N/A
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>204.95 AC.</b>	

- FUTURE TREATMENT AREAS
- SPRAY
- MPB PRESENT