



EPIC DISCOVERY- A
First of Its Kind
Summer Adventure
Experience

BACKGROUND

Problem Statement:

How can ski areas operating on federal lands under Forest Service Special Use Permits propose additional year-round recreation activities other than skiing or snowboarding?

WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?

Economic - Work Force - Access to Public Recreation Opportunities

- Ski areas are areas previously designated for developed recreation.
- Ski areas typically do not earn money for nearly half of the year.
- Ski areas lay off most of the seasonal winter work force.
- Ski areas have extensive infrastructure that sits idle for several months each year.
- Not a predictable outcome among Forests.

SO WHAT DID IT
TAKE





Public Law 112–46

112th Congress

An Act

To amend the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture regarding additional recreational uses of National Forest System land that is subject to ski area permits, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to amend the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 497b)—

- (1) to enable snow-sports (other than nordic and alpine skiing) to be permitted on National Forest System land subject to ski area permits issued by the Secretary of Agriculture under section 3 of the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 497b); and
- (2) to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to permit appropriate additional seasonal or year-round recreational activities and facilities on National Forest System land subject to ski area permits issued by the Secretary of Agriculture under section 3 of the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 497b).



THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

- The initial list of appropriate activities was floored into the Bill.
- The overall concept of fit within the Forest & within the ski area (i.e., it is still a winter sports area).
- Developing the FSM Guidelines.
- Heavenly was one of the first ones to implement new summer activities along with Vail.
- Setting a high bar for others to follow.













THE SITE DESIGN & PLANNING PROCESS (The What)

- Site Analysis
- Conceptual Plan
- Refined Plan
- Submitting the Project Proposal
- Understanding the Proposal

THE REVIEW PROCESS (The How)

- Land Use, Master Development Plan & Forest Plan Consistency
- NEPA effects analysis and laws of other jurisdictions: parallel review
- Engineering Plans/ Specs/ Calcs
- Owner's 3rd party engineering review
- Public NEPA Process
- Regional Office Policy Review

DECISION PROCESS & IMPLEMENTATION (The When)

- Pre-Decisional Objection Process
 - Decision Document
 - Conditions of Approval
 - Coordination with Other Agencies
 - 45-Day Detailed Engineering Review
 - Field Fitting Required
-
- What's it Going to Look Like on the Ground?













Here
80ft









A raindrop's journey

Rain and snow in the mountains sustains life far beyond where they fall.

High above Tahoe, water vapor condenses into raindrops and plunges to earth. The drops hit the topmost branch of a pine tree and slide down the needles to the ground. Their journey has just begun. Where they end up depends on where they land. Raindrops falling west of the Basin flow through California to the Pacific Ocean. Raindrops falling inside or east of Tahoe flow north. Their journeys will come to an end in the deserts of Nevada.



RAIN & SNOW

← CALIFORNIA

NEVADA →

STATELINE





DISCOVERY FOREST



Champion milder
Bears have the most diverse diet of any animal on earth.

The average bear can eat 200 pounds of food a day. They are omnivores, meaning they eat both plants and animals. They are also very smart and can learn to open doors and use tools.



WELL LIKE A BEAR?

Do you like to eat a lot of food? Do you like to play? Do you like to climb trees? Do you like to swim? Do you like to hibernate?



BEAR TRACKS

Do you see any tracks? Do you see any signs? Do you see any holes? Do you see any scratches? Do you see any droppings?

LESSONS LEARNED:
HOW CAN WE IMPROVE GOING
FORWARD?

1. Approach as a Partnership



BLACK BEAR

Long winter's nap



All you can eat
When hunkering up for winter, black bears can't afford to be picky eaters.

To survive a winter in the alps, bears need to pack on as much fat as possible when food is readily available. Bears have a diverse diet of grass, shrubs, berries, a diverse diet of grass, shrubs, berries, and will eat most when it's available. When food is scarce, bears will consume up to 50 hours and can consume 50,000 calories in a single day. That's the same as 34 pounds of pasta, 64 cheeseburgers, or 144 ounces of ice cream.




ICONIC LAKE TAHOE

Lake of the sky
Lake Tahoe is as valuable as it is beautiful.

For many generations, Lake Tahoe has been a major resource for the American West. The word "Tahoe" comes from the Shoshone word "Tahoe," meaning "the edge of the world." America's largest lake is surrounded by Lake Tahoe, and its surrounding mountains, forests, and meadows. The beauty of Lake Tahoe is as valuable as it is beautiful.

2. Engage the right vendors early, help them understand the process & requirements: manage expectations, speak the same language



3. Which Regs? Figure out all review standards and credentials: ASTM, ACCT, State of CA



4. Find ways to be efficient and thorough: short building & summer season; time is money; phase approvals & release in parts: don't wait to do it all at once







5. Develop Forest Service technical review bench strength



6. Conduct Group Post
Construction Evaluations: what
worked, didn't, what lessons can
we share with ourselves and with
others?

7. Create a complete experience, not just a series of individual activities; tell stories to connect people to the land and create a sense of place



8. It's about the staff & their ability to engage the guest



