

# ENCHANTED FOREST CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA

## MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**DRAFT**

February 13, 2019





# **Enchanted Forest Cross Country Ski Area: Master Development Plan**

*Prepared For:*

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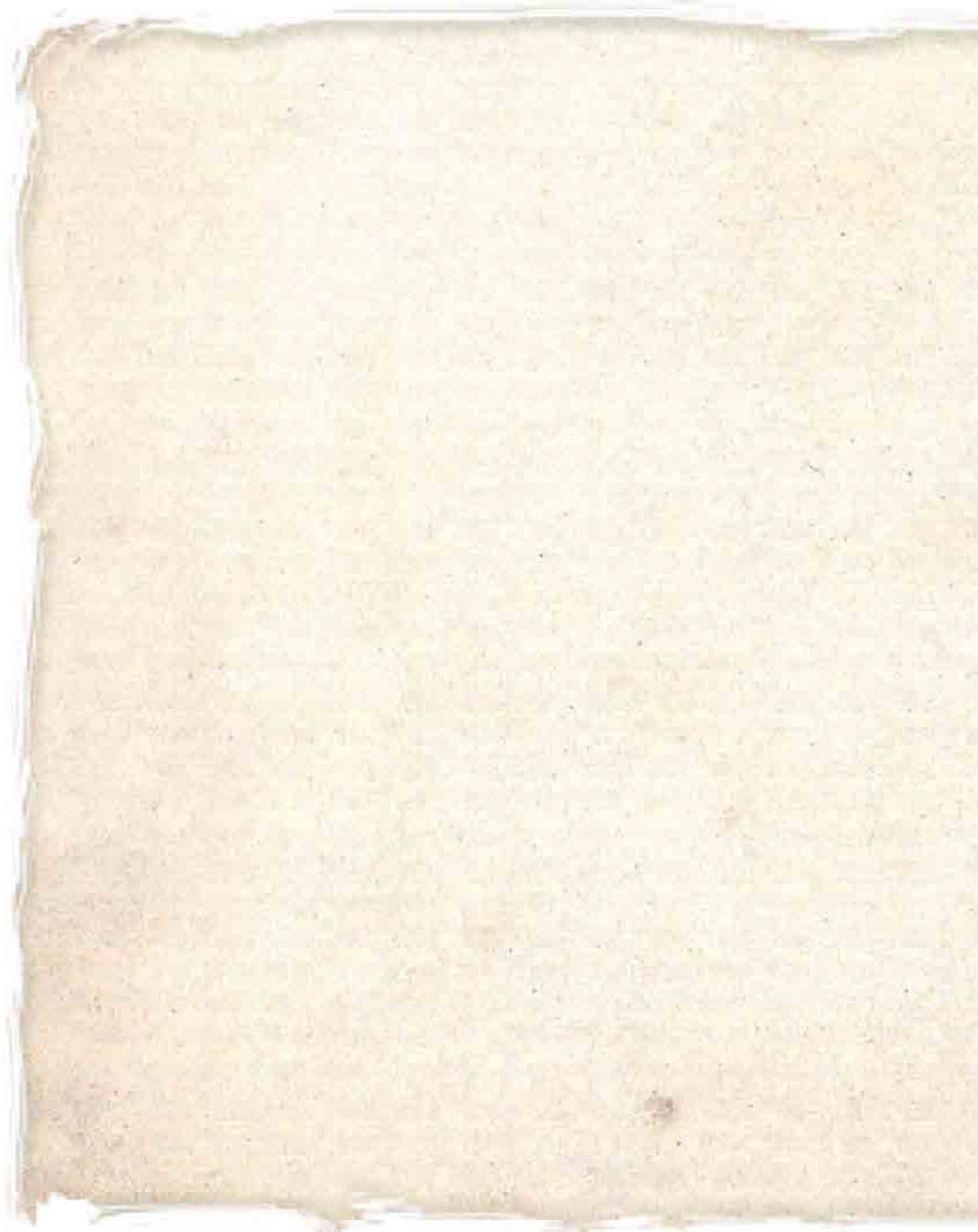
**February 13, 2019**

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# Chapter I:

## Introduction



*Nordic Skiing at EFXC*



## INTRODUCTION

This Enchanted Forest Cross Country Ski Area Master Development Plan 2014 is presented to the U.S. Forest Service, Questa District, as an update to the previous plan submitted and accepted in 2001. It is intended to set the conceptual framework for the development of permitted facilities and activities for year-round activities at the resort. The plan is submitted by Geoff Goins and Ellen Miller Goins, permit holders, DBA Enchanted Forest Cross Country Ski Area.

The concepts presented in this Master Development Plan are intended to guide the development of the EFXC Cross Country Ski Area over the next 10+ years. In addition to creating a world class year round recreational facility, the permit holders envision an outstanding economic development opportunity and chance to build something positive in the community. The underlying goal is to expand the offerings of unique wilderness experiences and adventures in a safe environment, and grow the facility to evolve into the "Enchanted Forest Outdoor Education and Adventure Center." Broadening the MDP as such is in keeping with the Ski Area Enhancement Act of 2011 and desire of the USFS to expand year-round activities.

The proposed concepts include:

- Enhanced programming – year-round opportunities
- Expanded permit boundary
- Expanded winter use including cross country ski and snowshoe trails
- Expanded yurt system
- Lodge location alternatives
- Entrance location alternatives
- Parking expansion
- Use plans for summer guests and activities

## PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

The purpose of this Master Development Plan (MDP) is to provide the framework for programming and site development at the Enchanted Forest Cross Country Ski Area (EFXC) over the next 5 to 10 years. This MDP document is intended to be dynamic and evolve as user needs and economic conditions dictate. The MDP serves as a road map for planning and design including the location, scale and character of future improvements.

Prior to the construction of any of the proposed improvements in this MDP document, the United States Forest Service (USFS) would determine if a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process was necessary to access potential impacts of the proposed action.

## USFS Special Use Permit

*"They the permit holders are hereby authorized to use National Forest lands, on the Carson National Forest, for the purposes of constructing, operating, and maintaining winter sports resort including food service, retail sales, and other ancillary facilities, described herein, known the Enchanted Forest Cross Country (EFXC) ski area and subject to the provisions of this term permit. This permit within Sections 31-33 of T28N, R15E, and Sections 3-6 of T28N, R15E, covers 560-acres described and shown on the attached map (Exhibit 1)."*

Conditions of the Special Use Permit require that the permittee prepare a MDP for addressing changes or improvements to the ski area. The SUP states:

*"In consideration of the privileges authorized by this permit, the holder agrees to prepare and submit changes in the Master Development Plan encompassing the entire winter sports resort presently envisioned for development in connection with the National Forest lands authorized by this permit, and in a form acceptable to the Forest Service. Additional construction beyond maintenance of existing improvements shall not be authorized until this plan has been amended. Planning should encompass all the area authorized for use by this permit. The accepted Master Development Plan shall become a part of this permit. For planning purposes, a capacity for the ski area in people-at-one time shall be established in the Master Development Plan and appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The overall development shall not exceed the capacity without further environmental analysis documentation through the appropriate NEPA process."*

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

This document represents the culmination of a year-long planning effort which included extensive research and analysis, field work and four meetings with the EFXC Owners, Carson National Forest Staff and the consultant team. In addition, USFS interdisciplinary resource specialists reviewed preliminary planning documents as they were developed.



The project was organized into six tasks:

- Task 1: Inventory and Analysis of Existing Site Conditions
- Task 2: Development of Site Opportunities and Constraints
- Task 3: Comparable Facilities Analysis
- Task 4: Preliminary Master Development Plan Improvements
- Task 5: Final Master Development Plan Improvements
- Task 6: Master Development Plan Document

The planning team conducted four field visits to understand existing site conditions, evaluate opportunities and constraints, develop site improvements and to confirm the feasibility of those improvements. Analysis mapping documenting the field work and research is presented in Chapters 3 and 4 of this report.

### ***MDP GOALS***

The planning team developed project goals at the outset of the planning effort to guide the EFXC's MDP development and to ensure we were meeting specific objectives of the plan. The goals developed for the MDP include:

- Provide recreation facilities and experiences that are consistent with the Carson National Forest's Forest Plan and associated planning documents.
- Improve the overall cross-country skiing and snowshoeing visitor experience by providing facilities that meet the needs of a larger segment of EFXC visitors.
- Expand the EFXC recreational offerings by providing year-round activities.
- Provide programs and uses that encourage youth to be more active in nature and become greater stewards for its protection.
- Broaden revenue generating opportunities for the EFXC's permit holder.
- Restore and protect natural and cultural resources.
- Promote visitor understanding and appreciation of the forest through education and interpretation.



*Expanded Overnight Accommodations*

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is used by the U.S. Forest Services to help determine the scale, amount and type of development at different sites. ROS is based on the premise that people expect certain levels of development related to the character of the setting and type of recreation they prefer. The ROS designation provides a framework to:

- Inventory existing opportunities.
- Analyze the effects of other resource activities.
- Estimate the consequences of management decisions on planned opportunities.
- Link user desires with recreation opportunities.
- Identify complementary roles of all recreation suppliers.
- Develop standards and guidelines for planned settings and monitoring activities.
- Help design integrated project sets for Forest Plan implementation.

The prescribed ROS classification for the area within the Carson National Forest utilized by the EFXC is Roaded Natural. The USFS's description of Roaded Natural reads as follows:

### ROAD NATURAL (RN)

*Location - Manage areas within 1/2 mile of paved highways and Forest, all weather and heavily used dirt roads to provide a RN recreation opportunity. This will include most of the recreation sites that are not near villages and towns.*

*Setting - The environment should be predominantly natural appearing with moderate evidence of human intervention. Resource modification and utilization practices may be evident, but should be in harmony with the natural environment. Interaction between users should be low to moderate, but evidence of other users may be apparent. On-site controls and restrictions of use may be present but are subtle. Facilities should be designed for four wheel drive and or high clearance rugged vehicles.*

*Experiences and Activities - There should be a high opportunity for interaction with the natural environment and a moderate opportunity for isolation from other people. User conveniences should be limited; users should experience self-reliance, challenge, and risk. Associated activities may be motorized. Non-motorized. Including jeep driving, bicycle riding, horseback riding, and foot travel transportation modes. Dispersed recreation activities predominate.*



*Wheeler Peak Wilderness*



## Chapter 2:

### EFXC Background

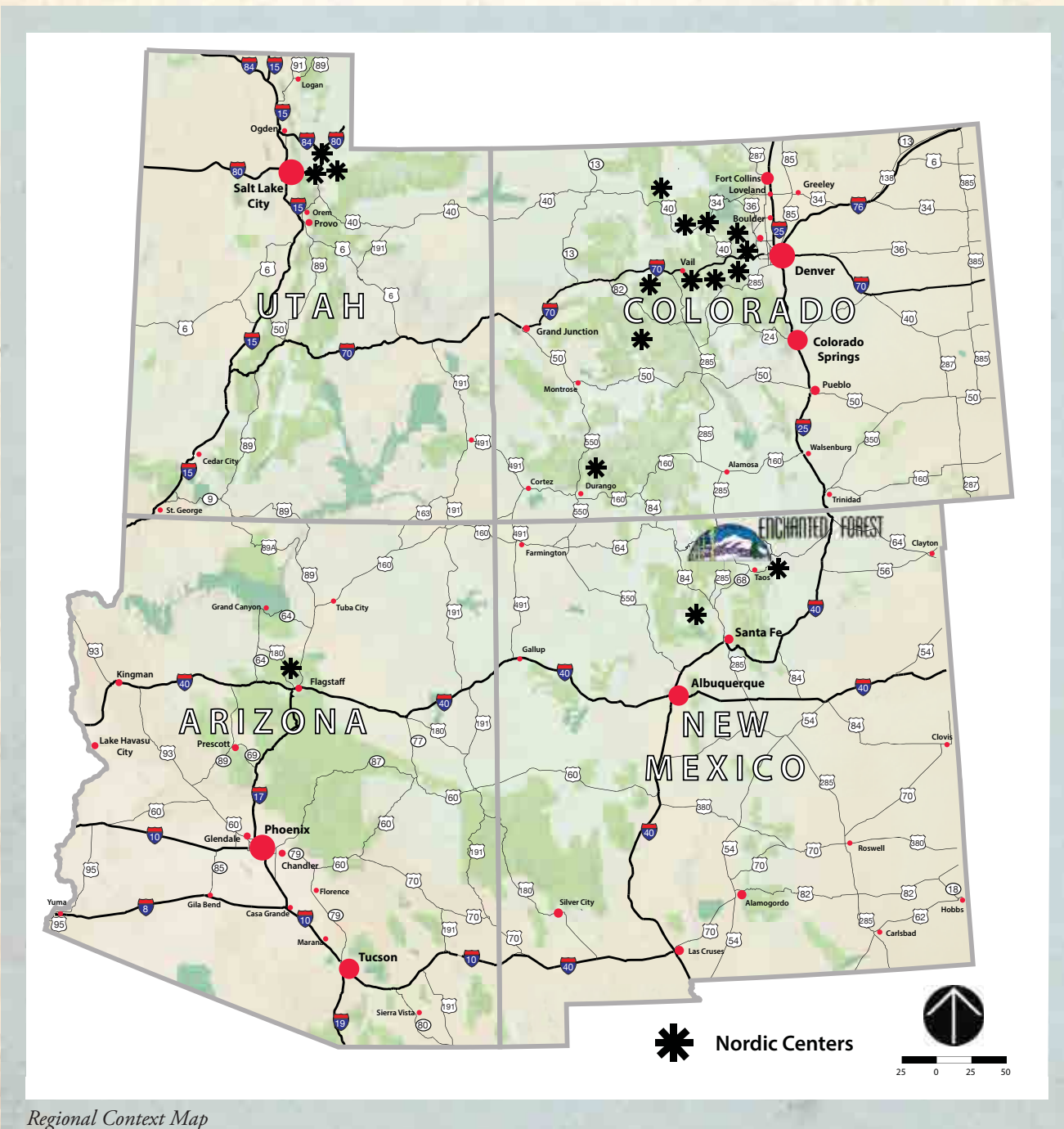


*Enchanted Forest Cross Country Ski Area*

## LOCATION OF THE EFXC

The EFXC is located in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of North Central New Mexico. The ski area is located along New Mexico Highway 38 near the summit of Bobcat Pass approximately three miles east of the Town of Red River. The ski area occupies 560-acres in the Carson National Forest. The EFXC is unique in the cross country ski industry due to its high elevation and southern latitude. The EFXC fills a unique niche in the New Mexico and southwest

skiing market as the only full-service cross country area in New Mexico. The EFXC is 36 miles northeast of Taos, 106 miles northeast of Santa Fe, 165 miles northeast of Albuquerque, 300 miles south of Denver, 282 miles north of Amarillo, 620 miles northeast of Phoenix and 728 miles southwest of Kansas City.” The closest towns to Red River are Eagle Nest (18 miles), Questa (12 miles), Taos (36 miles), and Angel Fire (27 miles) (see Regional Context Map below).







*Northern New Mexico Map*

## ***HISTORY OF THE EFXC***

The EFXC was conceived by the Miller family (permit holder/concessionaire) in June 1985 with a special use permit received in September 1985. 855 skier days were reported the first season. The peak season in 1994-1995 was just over 7500 skiers. **Recent years have seen a decrease in skier numbers including just over 3,800 in the 2013-2014 season and 3,500 skiers in the 2014-2015 season.**

In 1986 private land was added to the operation and a trail was constructed that created numerous loops. This allowed for the expansion to 35 km of trails. (This land has since been removed from the area when the contract expired.) In 1989 a day lodge with a snack bar was built and more grooming equipment added. In 1996-1997 snowshoeing was added.

In 2000, the permit holder acquired a lot in Mountain Shadows adjacent to the ski area so that the parking area could expand and it could be used for maintenance

equipment. In November 2011, the permit holder was granted a year-round use permit.

In 2001 the EFXC permit holder prepared a MDP addressing desired development at the ski area. Some of the proposed plans that have been implemented since then include: expansion of the cross-country trails on the east end of the ski area, the construction of the NW Passage, construction of snowshoe trails, the addition of a dog area for skiers and snowshoers, a warming hut at the grand intersection, summertime mountain bike operations, two rental yurts for overnight accommodations and an expansion to the base lodge. Items included in the **2001** MDP that have not been implemented include: a garage for grooming equipment, a new lodge, improved restrooms and an expanded parking area.

All of the previously implemented ski area improvements have undergone a Review of Environmental Impacts and are in compliance with USFS Management Practices.





## Chapter 3:

### Natural Environment



*EFXC Aspen Forest*





*EFXC From New Mexico Highway 38*

## **CLIMATE**

The EFXC receives on average 240 inches of snow each year with annual precipitation measuring 21 inches. On average there are 285 sunny days per year. The average summer-time high temperature is 75 degrees with a low of 38 degrees. The average winter-time high temperature is 40 degrees with a low of 38 degrees. The climatic trend over recent years has resulted in warmer, dryer year-round conditions. Modifications to the locations of some of the ski trails have been made over the years to account for diminishing snow levels.

## **WIND**

The prevailing winds at the EFXC generally come from the north with a more westerly flow during the spring and early summer. Pacific storms from the west account for most of the winter precipitation. The snow deposited on exposed west facing slopes tends to be shallower due to wind scouring.

## **VEGETATION**

A wide variety of trees can be found at the EFXC including Douglas fir, white fir, Engelmann Spruce, aspen and bristle cone pine. Healthier tree stands are typically found in the moister drainages. Drier conditions over recent years have led to significant mortality in some areas of the forest. Dead wood, unhealthy and overcrowded trees are contributing to an increased fire hazard.

The USFS issues wood cutting permits. However illegal wood cutting occurs throughout the permit area. Better monitoring/enforcement and signage is necessary to curb these activities.

## **LANDFORM**

The EFXC is located on a two-mile long and half-mile wide rolling plateau generally running east-west (see map on page 18). The average elevation of the site is 9,800 feet with a high point of 10,050 feet and a low point of 9,600 feet. The landform is characterized by gently sloping drainages that dissect the plateau approximately every quarter mile. Ephemeral and perennial streams originate in some of these drainages.



## **SLOPE**

The slope gradient is a primary factor in determining terrain ability designations for cross-country ski ideas. Ideally a ski area's terrain offers a range of gradients for a diversity of skier abilities and trail experiences. Novice skiers have trouble negotiating slopes exceeding 10 percent, while experienced skiers can handle short sections with slopes up to 40 percent. General slope gradient classifications are as follows: Beginner 0 to 10%, intermediate up to 25%, expert up to 50%.

While the EFXC does offer a wide variety of terrain, the majority of slope gradients and existing trails fall into the intermediate range (see Slope Analysis on page 20). The gentler slope gradients at the EFXC are located on the western end of the ski area, a significant distance from the base area. Beginner trails can be accommodated on some steeper slopes through the design of traversing trails.

## **ASPECT**

Slope aspect is an important consideration in the development of Nordic ski and snowshoe trails. In general, north and northeast aspects are the coldest and therefore retain snow longer. Northwesterly aspects can be good as well, but usually begin to degrade sooner. South and southwest slopes should be avoided when possible.

Most of the Nordic trails at the EFXC are located on northerly aspects with the exception of the far west end of Northwest Passage (see map on page 22). Here the

westerly aspect and sparse vegetation results in earlier melt out. Given the likely scenario of warmer winters with less abundant snowfall, future Nordic trails expansion should occur along the lower north facing slopes.

## **VIEW**

The EFXC's location atop a plateau affords excellent views in most directions when not under the forest's canopy. There are spectacular views of the Wheeler Peak Wilderness and the Moreno Valley to the south, Touch Me Not and Baldy Peaks to the east, Gold Hill to the southwest, and the Latir Peak Wilderness to the northwest. Careful consideration should be given maximizing view opportunities, as well as protecting view sheds to the EFXC from surrounding areas.

## **WILDLIFE**

The wildlife presents interpretive and environmental education opportunities.

Hunting is not permitted within the EFXC permit area.

Wildlife studies would need to be updated

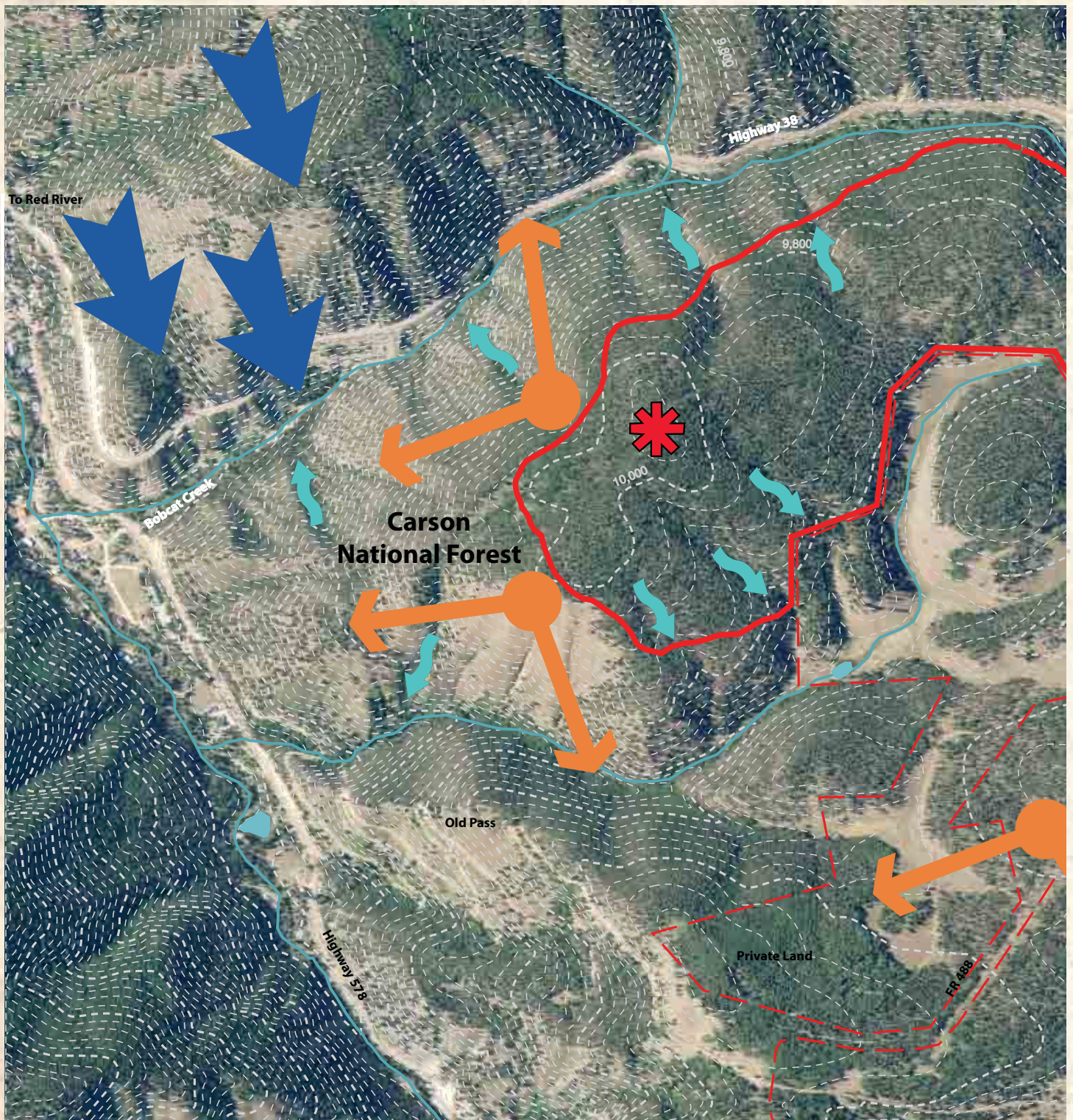
## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Currently, no significant cultural resources have been identified by the USFS in the permit boundary. However, any project that triggered a NEPA process would include a more thorough investigation of cultural resources. Several mining pits and test sites have been identified within the permit boundary.



*Views Towards Wheeler Peak*





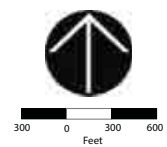
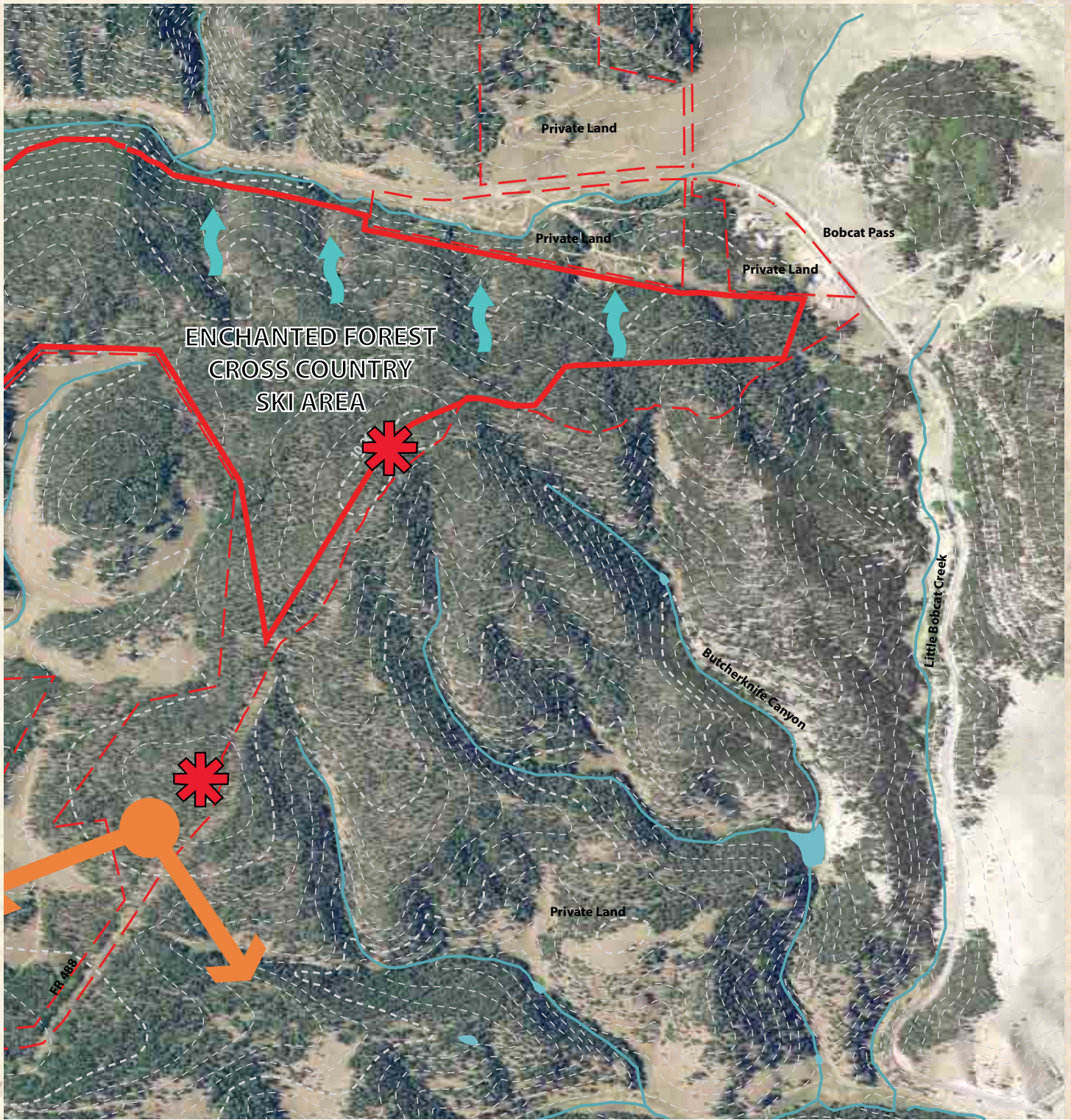
### Legend

- |  |                           |  |                 |  |                 |
|--|---------------------------|--|-----------------|--|-----------------|
|  | EF Permit Boundary        |  | High Point      |  | Pond            |
|  | USFS Boundary             |  | Major View Shed |  | Prevailing Wind |
|  | Contour (40 ft. Interval) |  | Drainage        |  |                 |
|  | Stream                    |  |                 |  |                 |



ENCHANTED FOREST  
CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA

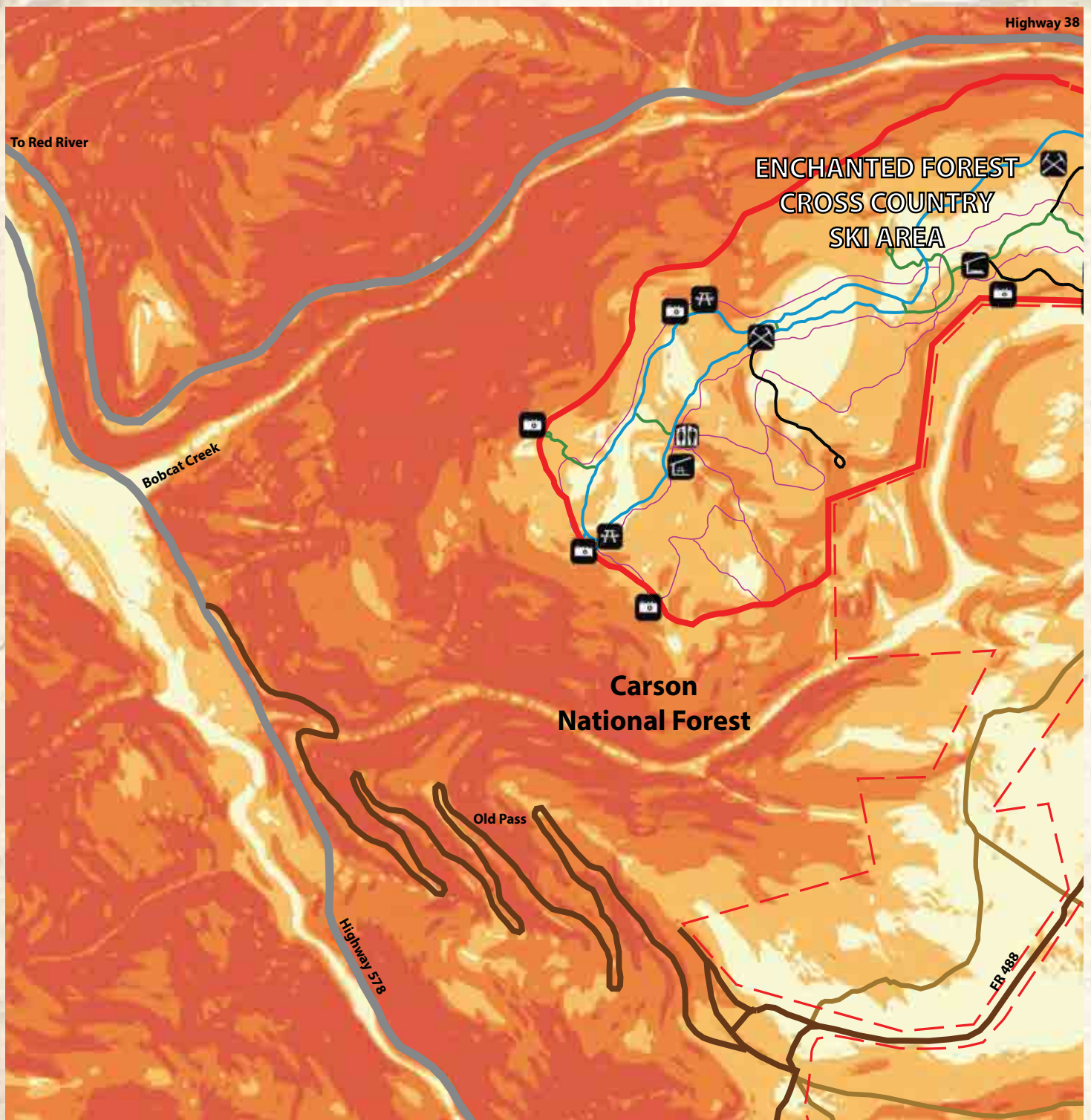




## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT







**Legend**



Picnic Table



Out House



View Point



Base Lodge



Mine



Yurt



Shelter



Parking

— State Highway  
 — Improved Road (Dirt)  
 — USFS Road  
 - - USFS Boundary  
 - - EF Permit Boundary



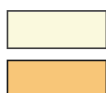
**ENCHANTED FOREST  
CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA**





- Easier Trail
- More Difficult Trail
- Most Difficult Trail
- Snowshow Trails

Percent Slope

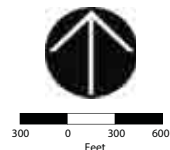


0-10%

10-25%

25-50%

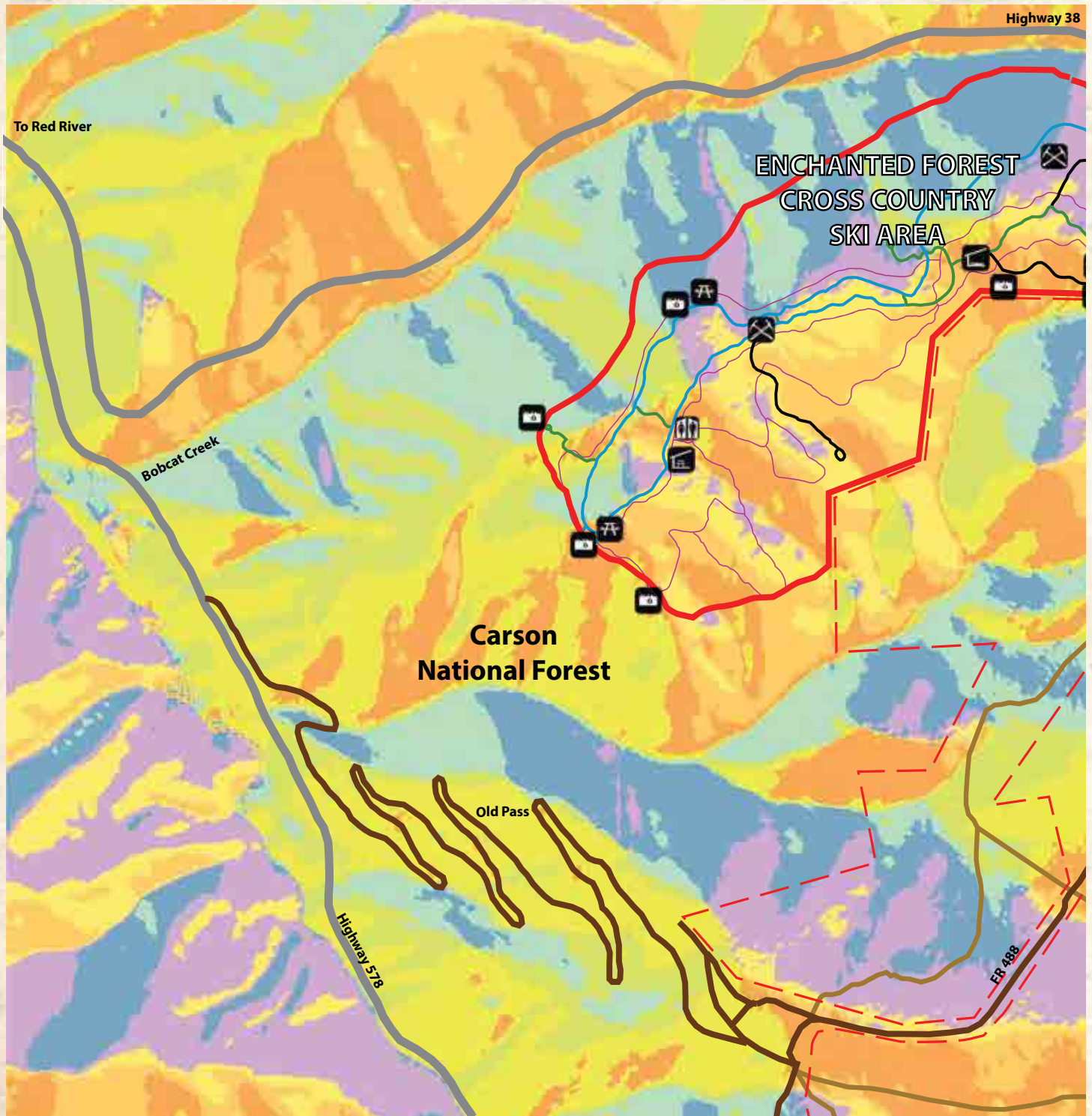
>50%



## SLOPE ANALYSIS







**Legend**



Picnic Table



Out House



View Point



Base Lodge



Mine



Yurt



Shelter



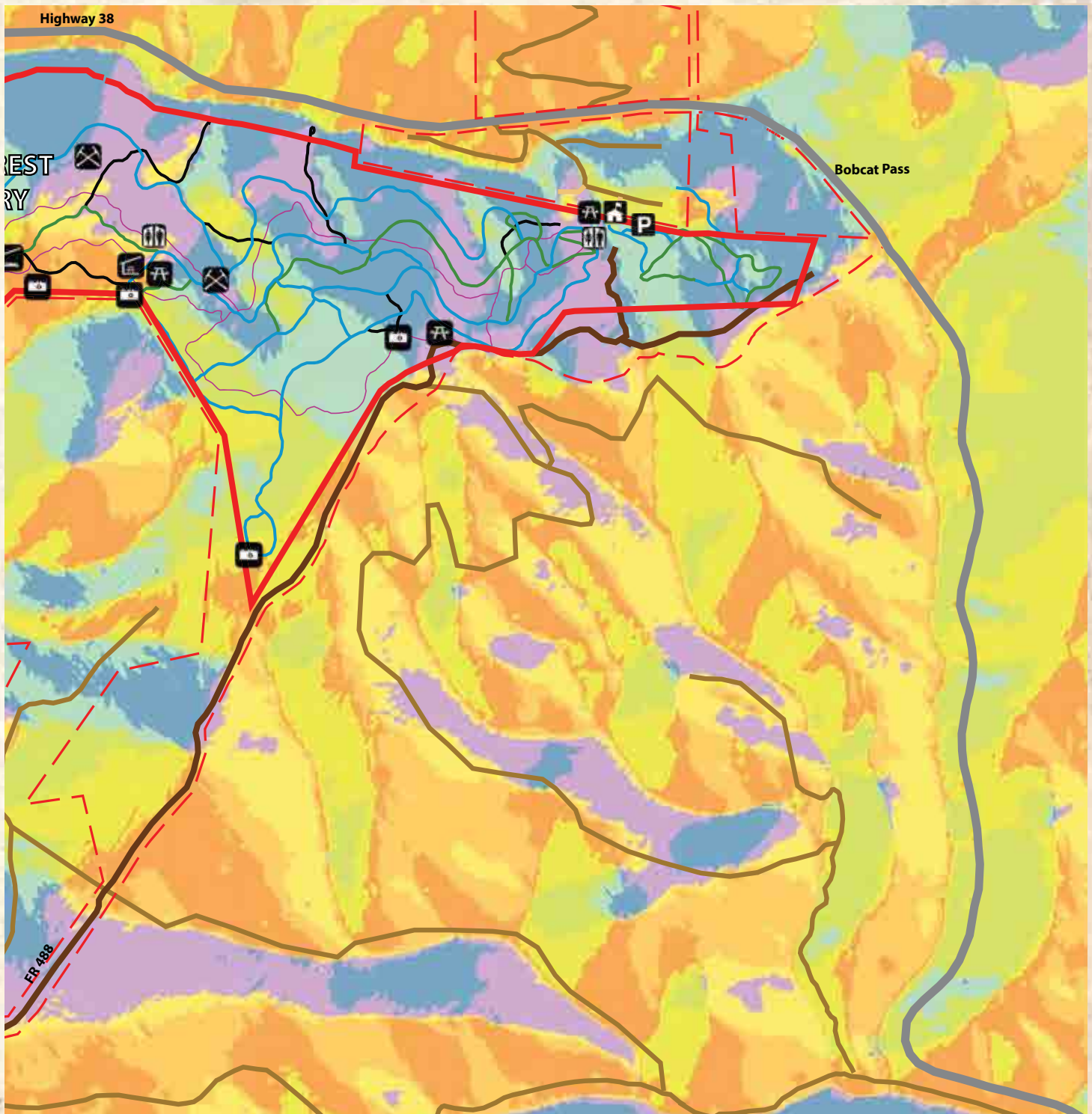
Parking

State Highway  
 Improved Road (Dirt)  
 USFS Road  
 USFS Boundary  
 EF Permit Boundary

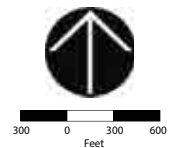
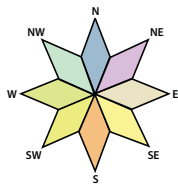


**ENCHANTED FOREST**  
**CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA**





- Easier Trail
- More Difficult Trail
- Most Difficult Trail
- Snowshow Trails



## ASPECT ANALYSIS







## Chapter 4:

### Existing Facilities



*EFXC Base Facilities*



## ***PERMIT BOUNDARIES AND LAND OWNERSHIP***

The 560-acre ski area is surrounded by the Carson National Forest and private land (see Existing Facilities map on page 30). The private land is comprised mostly of large acreage ranches. The permit area is entirely on US Forest Service land. The USFS's permit boundary for the EFXC is roughly defined by FS Road 488 to the south, the Mountain Shadows subdivision to the north, the Carson National Forest to the north and west and private ranch land along the south central portion of the ski area. The permit boundary with the Forest roughly follows the 9,200 foot contour. An adjacent land owner has his own operating agreement with the USFS for horse outfitting activities within the EFXC's permit boundary.

Generally EFXC's neighbors are supportive of the ski area and its day to day operations. There have been issues and concerns expressed regarding the access road and larger events at the ski area. There are two cattle grazing permits within the ski area boundary, but have not been utilized in a number of years.

## ***ACCESS AND CIRCULATION***

Current access to EFXC is from Highway 38 to Sangre de Cristo Road (public road). While this is the most direct access, the County road is very steep and winds through the residential neighborhood of Mountain Shadows. Due to its steep gradient and north aspect, ice develops and makes access very difficult in snowy conditions. It can be intimidating to some EFXC guests. The County does not recognize Sangre de Cristo Road as a County road and several homeowners in the Mountain Shadow subdivision believe the road is a private road as well. The permit holder garners goodwill by providing grading, sanding and snow plowing in winter. The actual access drive into the EFXC is a private spur road off Sangre de Cristo Road. The south side of the EFXC can be accessed from Forest Road 488 via the Old Pass Road, although this access does not reach the base area and is currently gated. Non USFS vehicular access to the EFXC is prohibited. There is no winter maintenance of FR 488.

Access to the EFXC is the most problematic issue for the permit holder and could be a limiting factor for EFXC's continued growth. There are several potentially viable solutions for the EFXCs access issues. Alternatives have been discussed and should be considered in the MDP.



*EFXC Access at Sangre de Cristo Road*





*EFXC Base Lodge*

## **PARKING**

Parking for the EFXC includes an approximately 40-space dirt parking lot at the ski area with 50 to 60 spaces at the overflow parking lot along NM Highway 38. As a result, the current private vehicle parking capacity at the EFXC is about 100 cars or 250 people (assuming 2.5 people per vehicle on average). Special events bring EFXC's parking to near capacity two or three weekends a season. In 2010, EFXC made arrangements with the Town of Red River for the Miner Shuttle to bring guests up the hill to the Highway overflow lot, where staff would then pick them up upon request. This has worked well but is not a long-term fix.

## **FACILITIES**

The EFXC's base area occupies the east end of an open meadow along the north boundary of the ski area. The base facilities are comprised of several small single story wood frame buildings that include a lodge, maintenance building and vault toilet outhouses. The lodge building includes an outdoor patio area and fire pit. All cross country ski trails leave from the base area.

With some exceptions the EFXC provides the basic level of facilities expected at a full service cross-country ski area.

For the most part the base facilities are not on par with the overall quality of the skiing experience.

## **Lodge**

The 850-square foot base lodge building houses an office, rental/sales shop, warming hut and a small lunch room area. Here guests can purchase passes, rent gear, book lessons and relax during their visit.

A retail shop offers gear and EFXC souvenirs are for sale. Ski and snowshoe rentals are also available.

Food service includes simple grab and go food such as candy bars, microwave burritos, soft drinks, coffee and water. The building itself is somewhat utilitarian without a particular design, architecture or character. During larger events the facility is significantly undersized accommodating only 30 to 40 people.

## **Restrooms**

Two heated outhouse restrooms are located adjacent to the lodge building at the base. These are sealed vault type facilities that are pumped regularly. No wastewater effluent is discharged. Porta-pottys are located adjacent to the overnight yurts at the west end of Little John trail and the NW Passage. There are also two outhouses—one is located



near the west end of the Northwest Passage and the other is located along the east end of Sherwood Forest.

### **Yurts**

The EFXC currently has three yurts. These platform style canvas yurts come equipped with a wood burning stove, bunk beds, table and basic furnishings. Two yurts are up and running and can be rented for overnight stays. The other is utilized as an on-trail day and evening lodge and event facility.

### **Maintenance Buildings**

A small maintenance shed is located adjacent to the base lodge building. This facility houses grooming equipment and other maintenance tools.

### **Site Furnishing**

Site furnishing at the EFXC include picnic tables, benches, trail and regulatory sign and fencing (wood and smooth wire).

### **UTILITIES**

Currently there are no domestic water wells or water distribution systems at the ski area. All of the residences in the Mountain Shadows neighborhood utilize private wells. There are no waste water treatment facilities or septic fields at the ski area. Other utility systems include a 500-gallon propane tank for day lodge and outbuilding heating and 40 amp two-phase electrical for lighting and power to the hut/lodge. These systems are adequate for current use, but in the future 100 amp three-phase service should be added for possible welding and heating needs. All solid waste is collected and disposed of in Red River. Aluminum cans and glass are taken to a recycling center.

### **TRAIL SYSTEM**

The EFXC's 560-acre trail system includes 40 trails covering 34 kilometers. The trails range from 8 to 12 feet wide and are groomed for classic and skate skiing. International Ski Federation standards for competition nordic trails is 6 meters (approx. 20 feet) or free skiing. The trails system is comprised primarily of two-way looped trails extending west from the base area. Most of the trails are located in forested areas with some open meadows and glades. The trail system offers skiing for all abilities.



*Little John Yurt*





*EFXC Snowshoe Trail*

An approximate breakdown of terrain by skier ability is as follows:

- 25% Beginner
- 65% Intermediate
- 10% Advanced

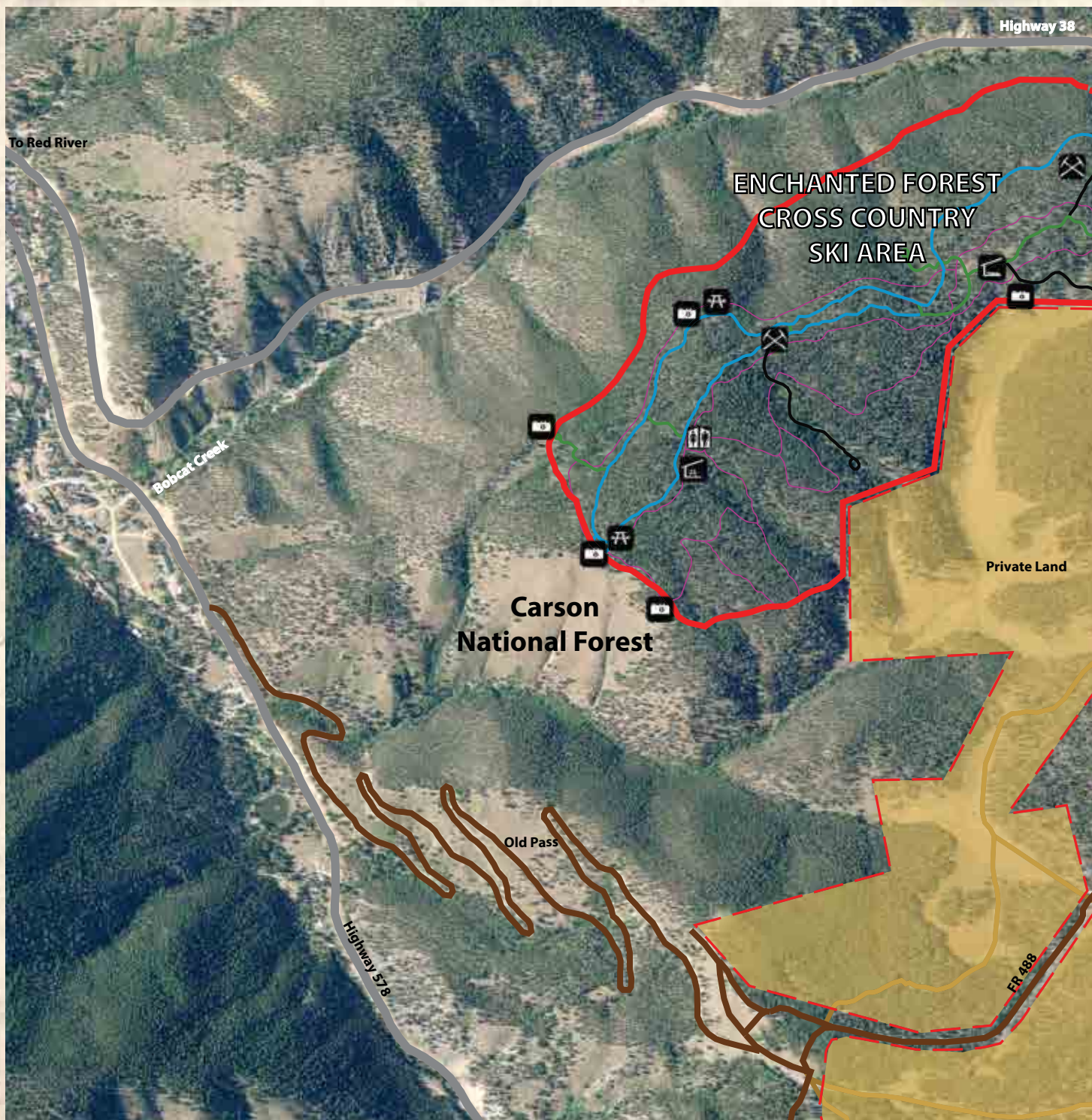
While this breakdown is close to meeting the desired market demand for cross-country skiing, the beginner and advanced segments are smaller than the optimal skier ability distribution by 5% to 10%. Also the EFXC is in need of more continuous beginner trails that are not separated by more difficult trail segments. Some rerouting or recontouring may be necessary to achieve the desired trail gradients.

The EFXC also offers 18 kilometers of designated snowshoe trails encompass a significant portion of the permit boundary. In addition, there are 5 kilometers of dog accessible ski and snowshoe trails just east of the base lodge. Approximately 2 kilometers of ski trails are not groomed during the season. Motorized vehicles are not permitted on the trails with the exception of grooming machinery and snowmobiles for management, maintenance and routine patrols.

### ***EXISTING EFXC FACILITIES***

Base Area Day Lodge (single story, wood frame)	850 Sq. Ft.
Picnic Tables, Benches, Signage, Fire Pit, Patio	
2 Outhouse Restrooms (heated w/ electricity)	96 Sq. Ft.
3 Year-Round Rental Yurts	
Little John Trail (5 yrs. old)	200 Sq. Ft.
NW Passage (2 yrs. old)	315 Sq. Ft.
Warming Hut (5 yrs. old)	450 Sq. Ft.





# Legend



Picnic Table



Out House



View Point



Base Lodge



Mine



Yurt



Shelter



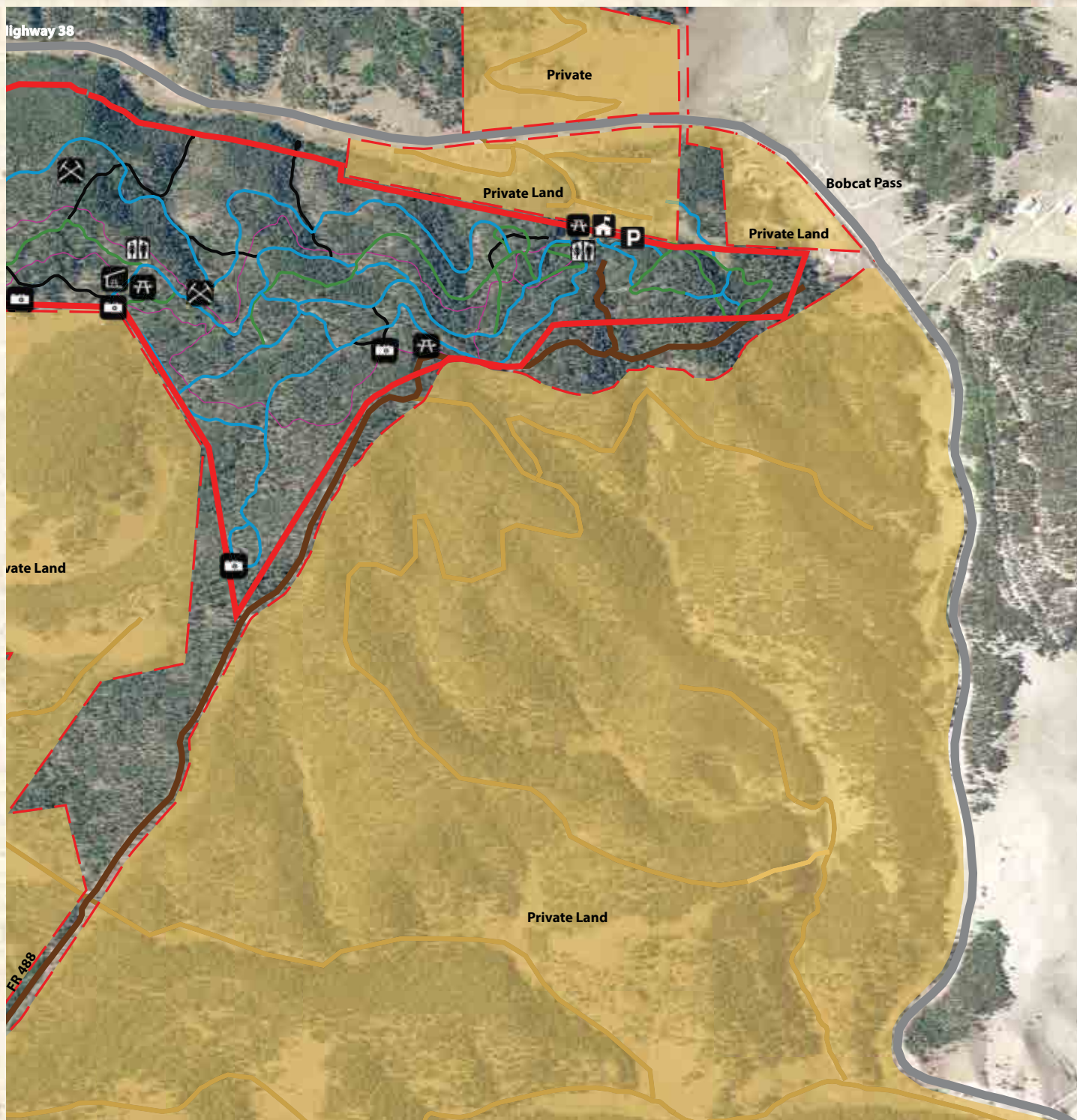
Parking

State Highway  
Improved Road (I  
USFS Road  
USFS Boundary  
EF Permit Bound:

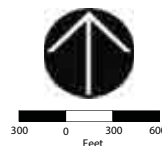


ENCHANTED FOREST  
CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA





- Easier Trail
- More Difficult Trail
- Most Difficult Trail
- Snowshow Trails



## EXISTING FACILITIES







## Chapter 5:

### Current Uses and Programming



*EFXC Base Area*

## ACTIVITIES

For years, EFXC has been the only full-service cross-country ski and snowshoeing area in New Mexico and has provided recreational opportunities for people of all ages that have not been readily available in New Mexico. While professionals and competitive skiers have raced at EFXC, others who have experienced the area include physically challenged individuals including the visually impaired and those with special physical needs. Skiers from every state and 19 foreign countries have enjoyed EFXC. The overnight yurts have provided a unique new experience in the EFXC. Visitors appreciate the fact that trails are patrolled and rescue capabilities exist, offering a safe wilderness adventure. The fastest growing clientele appears to be senior citizens and snowshoers.

In the summer, hikers, mountain bikers, sight seers, runners, horseback riders and wood gatherers utilize the trails. With year-round programming, target visitors for the EFXC will include: Cross-country skiers, snowshoers, as well as runners and cyclists who wish to cross train, mountain bikers, hikers, hut goers, campers and those headed into the backcountry. The outdoor/environmental education and interpretive possibilities are endless as well. Trail running camps, mountain bike camps, youth backpack trips, scout orienteering activities, outdoor leadership, challenge courses and yoga are possibilities as well.

## EVENTS

In recent years, EFXC has played host to numerous races and clinics, including NCAA regional ski races, mountain bike races and trail running clinics and events. Social events such as moonlight snowshoe hikes and holiday dessert ski events have brought regular and new visitors to the area. Night sky star gazing events have been a highlight. Cyclocross races, multisport races, moonlight tours, astronomy walks, luminaria tours, weddings, geo caching, running races, PSIA skier improvement clinics, USSSA snowshoe national qualifiers, NMORS mountain bike races, headlamp snowshoe dinner tours, and moonlight dinner tours are all possibilities.

## OPERATIONS

Day to day ski area operations include first aid, grooming, patrolling, guest services – lessons, rentals, shop, shuttle. The permit holder has an approved USFS Operating Plan that is updated every year. This plan includes a complete description of EFXC operating procedures.



*EFXC Mountain Bike Race*



## Chapter 6:

### Market Analysis



*Winter Recreation*

## **REGIONAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

According to the SCORTP report for New Mexico Region II information, tourism, both cultural and outdoor recreation, is a vital component of the region's local economy, particularly in the communities of Angel Fire, Red River, Taos, and Santa Fe. The following is a list of popular outdoor activities in the region around EFXC and Red River.

**Winter:** Downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross country skiing, backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, ice skating, ice fishing, fishing, hot springs, tubing

**Summer:** Hiking, camping, road cycling, mountain biking, trail running, fishing, golf, kayaking, white water rafting, horseback riding, hunting, ballooning, photography, 4-wheeling, hot springs, chairlift rides, rodeos, bird-watching, star gazing, wildflower walks, mining tours, ATV tours (Greenie Peak and Bobcat Pass), ski area chair lift rides and mountain biking, summer tubing, motorcycle riding

Year-round Activities (not outdoor): Sightseeing, touring sacred places (pueblos, churches, ruins), driving tours, shopping, dining, gallery visits, museum tours, relaxation

## **REGIONAL DESTINATIONS**

There are many recreational and cultural destinations in the region from which to draw local, regional, national and international visitors. The key destinations in the area are: Santa Fe, Taos (town), Taos Pueblo, Taos Ski Valley, Wheeler Peak (13,161 ft. NM state high point), Gold Hill (12,682 ft), Enchanted Circle Scenic Byway (84-mile loop tour), Red River Ski Area, Angel Fire Ski Area, Northern Pueblos and Bandelier National Monument, Carson National Forest, Rio Grande Gorge Bridge & Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River and others parks, lakes, and sacred places, missions, culture/history, galleries, museums, music, restaurants, and performing arts.

### **Taos and Santa Fe**

According to the Taos Chamber, Taos draws 1 million visitors annual. This coupled with residents - 6,000 in town and 30,000 in Taos County, creates a great pool from which to draw more skiers to EFXC. With more than 60+ hotels and condos in Taos, there are opportunities to co-promote Taos, Taos Ski Valley and EFXC as the ultimate skier's destination. In addition, Santa Fe has 68,000 residents and 1.1 - 1.2 million visitors annually, thus creating a nearby target market for EFXC to promote the area to both locals and those visiting.

### **Red River**

Red River records 300,000 visitors annually, with 55% summer, 45% winter. The average daily tourist population is 3895, and the average daily occupancy rate is 48.6% (the average of both on and off seasons). During peak season and holidays, Red River hosts as many as 10,000 people a day. Red River Ski Area estimates an average of 120,000 skier days per year, however other statistics show the number closer to 80,000.

### **Carson National Forest (from USFS NUVM report 2009)**

The number of visitors to Carson National Forest, home to the EFXC, has been reported to be 960,000 annually. 88% list their purpose for the visit as recreation, with 8.2% specifying it for cross country skiing for an average time of three hours. 22% of the visitors come from New Mexico, with 29% from within 25 miles, 12% within 50 miles, 22% 51-200 miles, 13% 200-500 miles, 21% over 500 miles. The data did not specify if any of the visits were to EFXC, but clearly there are more visitors to be captured in this popular forest.

## **CORRELATION OF REGIONAL VISITORS AND CROSS-COUNTRY SKIERS**

Demographic research shows there to be a strong correlation between cross-country skiers and visitors to New Mexico (16 million annually), Red River, and Carson National Forest. The majority of cross-country skiers are 35 - 54 years old, while both New Mexico and Red River have an average visitor age of 46. Additionally, 48% of visitors to the Carson National Forest are in the same range at 40-59 years old. With the top states for overnight visitors to New Mexico being New Mexico, California, Texas, Arizona and Colorado, most of these visitors come from the region of the country with 30% of US cross-country skiers. This is all good news for the EFXC to capture more skiers from the pool of visitors to the State and region. EFXC, as the premier cross country ski area in NM, could grow to be a significant tourist draw to those same visitors with additional facilities, year-round programming and additional marketing.



## **EFXC USER DEMOGRAPHICS**

EFXC draws from a large cross-section of the public. 60-70% of visitors are families from western Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas visiting Red River, who are either already cross-country skiers or those wanting to learn and enjoy winter recreation. 10-30% of EFXC guests are day trippers from Taos, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Albuquerque and southern Colorado, who are the season pass holders and XC ski enthusiasts who come to EFXC once a week or more in the winter. The smallest portion of EFXC visitors, 5-20%, comes from the avid ski tourist. These are the folks who are traveling on a ski vacation, specifically to EFXC, who have actively sought out the southwest as a destination for a ski holiday. There is great opportunity to expand this group through marketing and base improvements. The remaining 5-20% EFXC winter visitors are the non-skier and snowshoers. Snowshoeing is one of the fastest growing sports in North America.

Special interest groups who utilize the EFXC include: SW Nordic Ski Club (Los Alamos), NM XC Ski Club ABQ, UNM team – 2x per season to train, those training for the Grants-Mt. Taylor Quadrathlon, school groups (Red River Valley charter, Taos schools, Roots and Wings Community School), NCAA races – UNM invitational which draws skiers from all over the world, and the Norwegian National team (w Olympians).

## **CURRENT VISITATION NUMBERS**

During the winter of 2012/2013 the EFXC had approximately 5,000 skier visits. The EFXC's best year for visitation was 1993 when they had over 7200 skier visits. EFXC's goal is to have 8,000 to 12,000 skier visits.

The breakdown of current skier visitation to the EFXC is:

- 180-200 visitors on Saturday during peak season
- 70-80 visitors during a typical Saturday
- 20 or less during a weekday

## **US CROSS-COUNTRY SKIER DEMOGRAPHICS**

Cross-country skier visitation numbers are on the rise, from 3.5 million skier visits in 2006 to 4.5 million in 2009. Nearly 30% of cross country skiers live in the Western US. The typical Nordic skier is between 35 and 54 years old and has a college degree with household earning above \$100k. While there are more males that cross country ski than females, by a ratio of 55/45, women are more likely than men to visit a Nordic center at a rate of 60/40. 2.6 million Nordic skiers spend an average of 7.8 days skiing. Almost three-quarters of Nordic skiers are also hikers, making

them an excellent target group for year-round activities at the EFXC.

According to the Physical Activity Council and the NSGA Sports Participation Study the following statistics illustrate the US participation in cross country skiing and related sports. Snowshoeing 17.4%, Mountain Biking 14.6%, Hiking 11.6%, Cross Country Skiing 8.0 %, Bird watching 4.9%, and Trail Running 1.7%. The Outdoor Foundation's statistics on participation also show activities popular in the EFXC region: Running, Jogging and Trail Running - 17%, Road, Mountain Biking and BMX - 15% and Hiking - 12%. Mountain biking and snowshoeing are major growth areas for EFXC.

## **NEW MEXICO SKI DATA**

Ski New Mexico reports that overall state-wide skier numbers have been reported as 854,963 skiers in 2011-2012, up 19%. This is primarily downhill but does include cross country skiers. The skier visits generated an economic impact of \$477.6 million. The ski resorts in New Mexico employ 2500 people. The largest skier draw in the state comes from Taos Ski Valley, which averages 200,000 skier visits each year. Red River Ski Resort, the closest to EFXC, has stated its skier numbers average 120,000, but other data indicates it might be closer to 80,000.

EFXC, the only full service cross country and snowshoe resort in New Mexico has approximately 90 -95% of the cross country skier market share in New Mexico. Statewide competition comes from Angel Fire – 15k of classic and skate skiing trails and snowshoeing on a golf course located at 8,800 ft. making a shorter season with less dependable snow, Valles Caldera 10 miles of trail that is not regularly groomed, Chama Valley - 10k of trails groomed only for races and special events, Los Alamos – has a club that grooms 10K, Amole Canyon – not groomed and Sandia Peak. The closest full service cross-country ski areas comparable to EFXC are in Colorado and Arizona.





## **COMPARABLE CROSS-COUNTRY SKI AREA FACILITIES**

Three similar facilities, all functioning within the USFS, were reviewed to see what attributes and facilities might be incorporated into the EFXC MDP. They included:

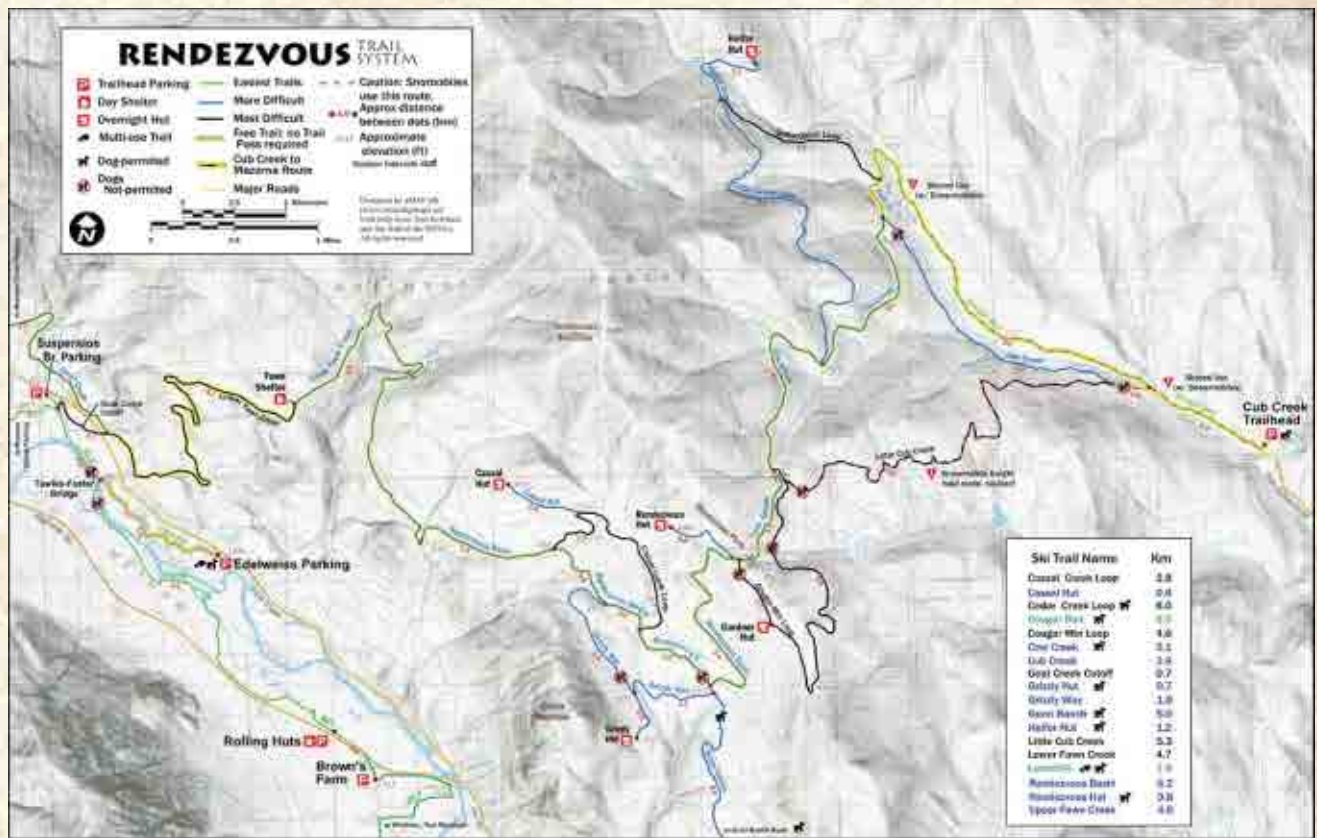
**Arizona Nordic Village** (AZ - Coconino NF), Galena Lodge (ID - Sawtooth NF) and Rendezvous Huts (WA - Okanogan/Wenatchee NF). Arizona Nordic Village, [www.arizonanordicvillage.com](http://www.arizonanordicvillage.com), managed by Off the Grid Getaways, has 40K of groomed ski trails as well as an overnight hut and cabin system. The cabins and yurts boast a 90%- occupancy on weekends and rent from \$55-75/night. A log lodge serves as the base with cabins from mile out to a 3-hour ski to the yurts. They hold classes, weddings, group campouts, family reunions, races and events.

**Galena Lodge**, [www.galenalodge.com](http://www.galenalodge.com), is a community-owned day lodge that is a home-base for cross-country skiers, hikers, mountain bikers and campers. It has 50K of groomed trails with connections to 30K more in the valley that links to Ketchum. The lodge is owned and managed by the Blaine County Recreational District, and serves lunch and dinner in the lodge, and dinner can be delivered by snowmobile to yurt guests. They manage three overnight yurts (rents from \$125-155) and have a retail shop for gear, rentals and lessons and offer guided ski and mountain bike tours. They host adventure camps and training classes, and serve as the start for the internationally known cross country ski race, The Boulder Mountain Tour.



*Galena Yurt*





**Rendezvous Huts**, [www.rendezvoushuts.com](http://www.rendezvoushuts.com), in the Methow Valley, WA is a privately owned and managed system of five huts in the North Cascades surrounded by 200K of groomed trails in the winter and forest roads in the summer. There is no base and the maintenance is handled by the Methow Valley Sport Trails Association. Daily ski passes are required in addition to hut fees from \$150-200/night. The closest huts to the trail head are 6 miles in so the snowmobile gear shuttle for \$85 each way is worth the price.





## Chapter 7:

### Design Criteria



*Creating a Sense of Solitude and Serenity*

In order to make the EFXC more appealing and capture a larger cross-section of folks recreating and visiting Northern New Mexico, the ski area needs to provide a wider range of uses, activities, facilities and visitor services. Upgrades and expansion will be influenced by a number of design criteria which include:

### ***COMPATIBLE USES AND ACTIVITIES***

Any modifications to the existing EFXC programming and facilities should not result in degradation of the existing cross country ski experience and opportunities. It is important that any changes proposed in the MDP provide the same sense of solitude and serenity. Compatible winter uses include expanded skiing, showshoeing and glade skiing at an appropriate location. Overnight use should be implemented in a manner that does not interfere with or alter the visitor experience for the day user. Compatible summer activities include hiking, biking and providing accessible trails. Educational programs, events and camps should be balanced with recreation, providing a quality experience for all participants.

### ***COMFORTABLE CARRYING CAPACITY***

The comfortable carrying capacity (CCC) is defined as an optimal level of utilization for the ski area (the number of visitors that can be accommodated at any given time) which guarantees a pleasant recreational experience, while at the same time preserving the environment. The Cross Country Ski Areas Association's guideline for Nordic ski area CCC is six skiers or less per kilometer of trail. At the EFXC that equates to approximately 350 skiers or less at any given time, well above the ski area's current high visitation periods. Visitor numbers during busy holiday weekends typically number 150 skiers or less.

### ***LIMITING FACTORS***

A primary consideration of the development of the MDP is balancing expansion with the EFXC's limiting factors. Limiting factors are those elements that dictate the appropriate levels of development throughout the ski area. The EFXC's current limiting factor is access and parking. In order to justify expansion of programming and facilities, issues associated with access and parking must be addressed and resolved. Once the access and parking issues are resolved, other limiting factors come into play such as resource protection, facility capacities and the visitor experience.



*Comfortable Carrying Capacity is Integral to the Skier Experience*



## **DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Trail System**

The cross-country ski trail system should provide an interesting and challenging ski experience for a wide range of ability levels consistent with market demand. Generally cross-country ski trails consist of one-third uphill, one-third downhill and one-third rolling or undulating. Like the existing EFXC trail system, future cross-country ski trails will adhere to the following design standards:

- Favor northeast facing slopes for better snow coverage.
- Utilize looped trails with multiple internal connector trails and a single point access.
- Design for skiers traveling 2 to 8 miles per hour with typical outings lasting 2 to 4 hours.
- Heavily used trails or hills should be at least 12 feet wide, and lightly used trails 8 feet wide.
- Trails should not cross contours at right angles.
- Optimal trail cross-slope is 2%.
- Provide adequate sight distances (100 ft. min.) for steep downhill or trail intersections.
- The radius on curves should be at least 50 feet and preferably 100 feet.
- The longer and steeper the downhill the longer and straighter the run-out zone.
- Provide rest areas and benches at regular intervals and shelters every 8 to 12 miles
- Design sustainable trails (low impact and low maintenance).

Cross-country ski trails provide an excellent environment and platform for mountain biking. The existing ski trails and snowshoe trails at the EFXC would require few if any modifications for mountain bike usage. The EFXC's most challenging ski trails fall well within the design limits of mountain bike trail construction.

New mountain bike and hiking trails would have to be designed carefully and with sustainability in mind. The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) defines sustainable trail as:

- It supports current and future use with minimal impact to the area's natural systems
- It produces negligible soil loss or movement while allowing vegetation to inhabit the area
- It does not adversely affect the area's animal life.

- It accommodates existing use while allowing only appropriate future use.
- It requires little rerouting and minimal long-term maintenance.

The proposed hiking and biking trails at the EFXC would be looped single track trails designed to the following specifications:

- The tread width should be a maximum of 18 inches. Riders are accustomed to stopping to allow passing.
- Trail gradients (%) will not exceed half of the sideslope (%) of the hill it is traversing.
- Generally trails will not exceed 10% slope, up to 15% is permissible with an adequate surface materials or bedrock.
- Utilize grade reversals on slopes to divert water off trails.
- Trails should have an outslope of 3 to 5% to allow for proper drainage.
- Keep climbing turns as wide as possible at least a 30-foot radius.



*Single Track Trail*

## Facility Design

An essential component of the design of new facilities should include the development of a design theme for all ski area facilities. A consistent and identifiable design character should be established and replicated on all new structures. The USFS's Built Environment Image Guide (BEIG) provides guidelines for facility aesthetics. The general principals of the BEIG are:

"The elements of the built environment constructed on national forest lands and grasslands, or those used for administrative purposes in rural areas, towns, and cities, shall—to the extent practicable—incorporate the principles of sustainability, reflect their place within the natural and cultural landscape, and provide optimal service to our customers and cooperators.

These elements will:

- Be located, planned, and designed with respect for the natural systems in which they reside.
- Aesthetically integrate their natural, cultural, and experiential context.
- Contain design elements, including appropriate signs that reinforce a national agency identity.
- Emphasize efficiency of energy and materials consumption in construction and operation.
- Serve as premier examples to interpret conservation of natural resources and sustainable development.
- Create environments for people to enjoy and gain increased appreciation for the natural environment, and in which employees work productively, experiencing the connection to the resources they manage".



*Facilities for People to Enjoy the Natural Environment*



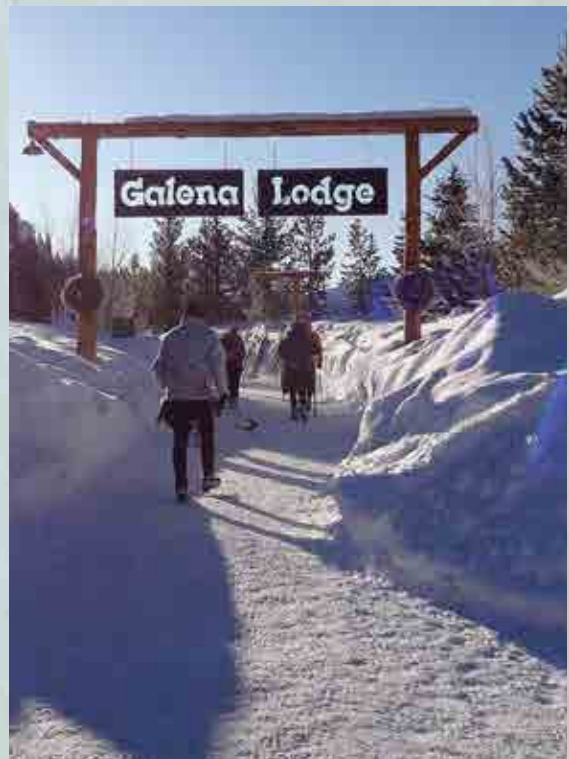


*Rocky Mountain Province Rustic Character*

As outlined in the USFS's Built Environment Image Guide, Northern New Mexico's regional design character falls within the "Rocky Mountain Province". The design guidelines established for new facilities within this province should synthesize rustic precedents with contemporary needs and realities. The design of new facilities at the EFXC should reflect the materials, style and character of these architectural examples.



*Design Style and Materials*



*Design Elements and Details*



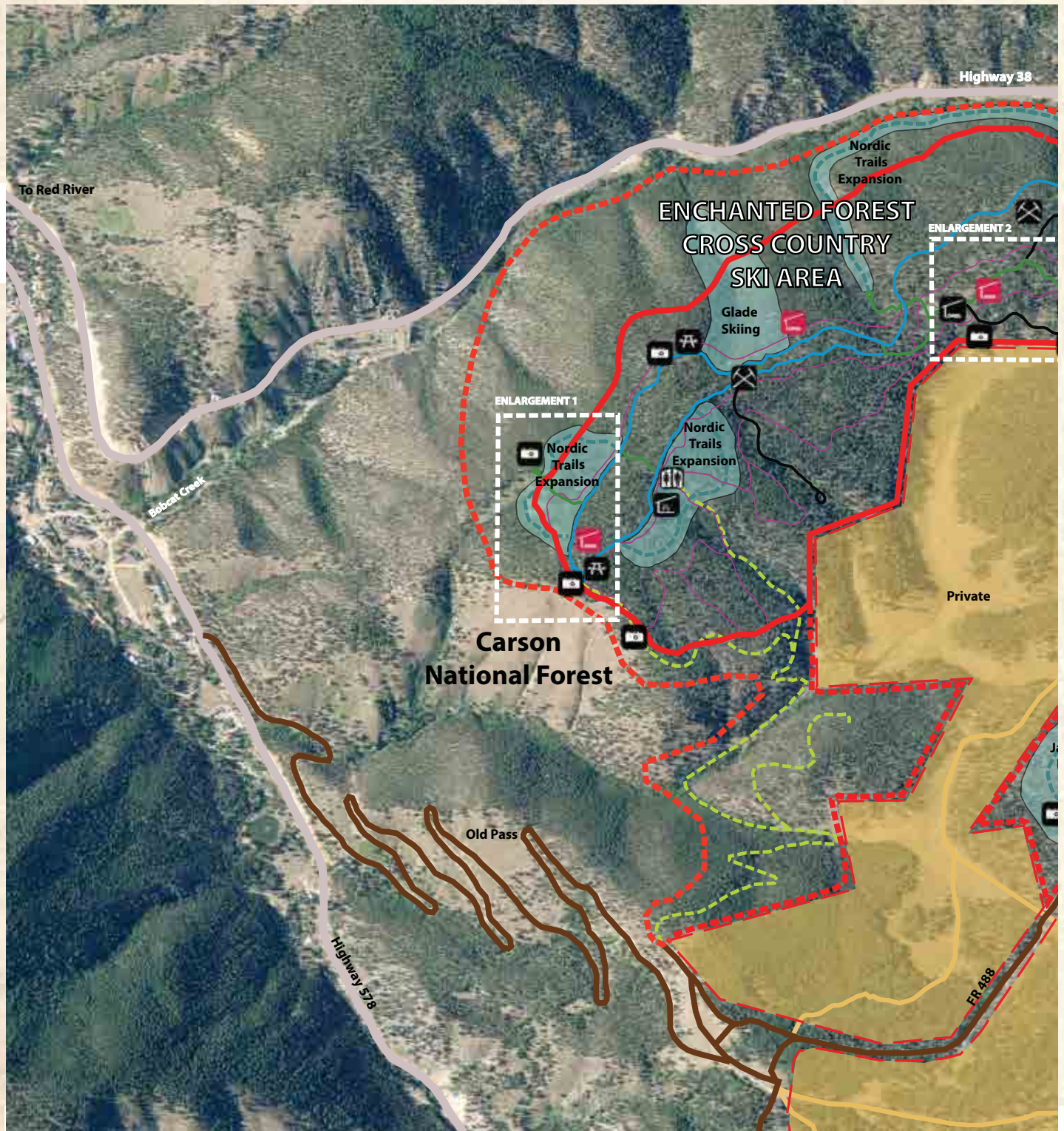


## Chapter 8:

### Proposed Improvement Plan



*Expanded Overnight Yurt Opportunities*



**Legend**



Picnic Table



Out House



View Point



Base Lodge



Mine



Yurt



Shelter



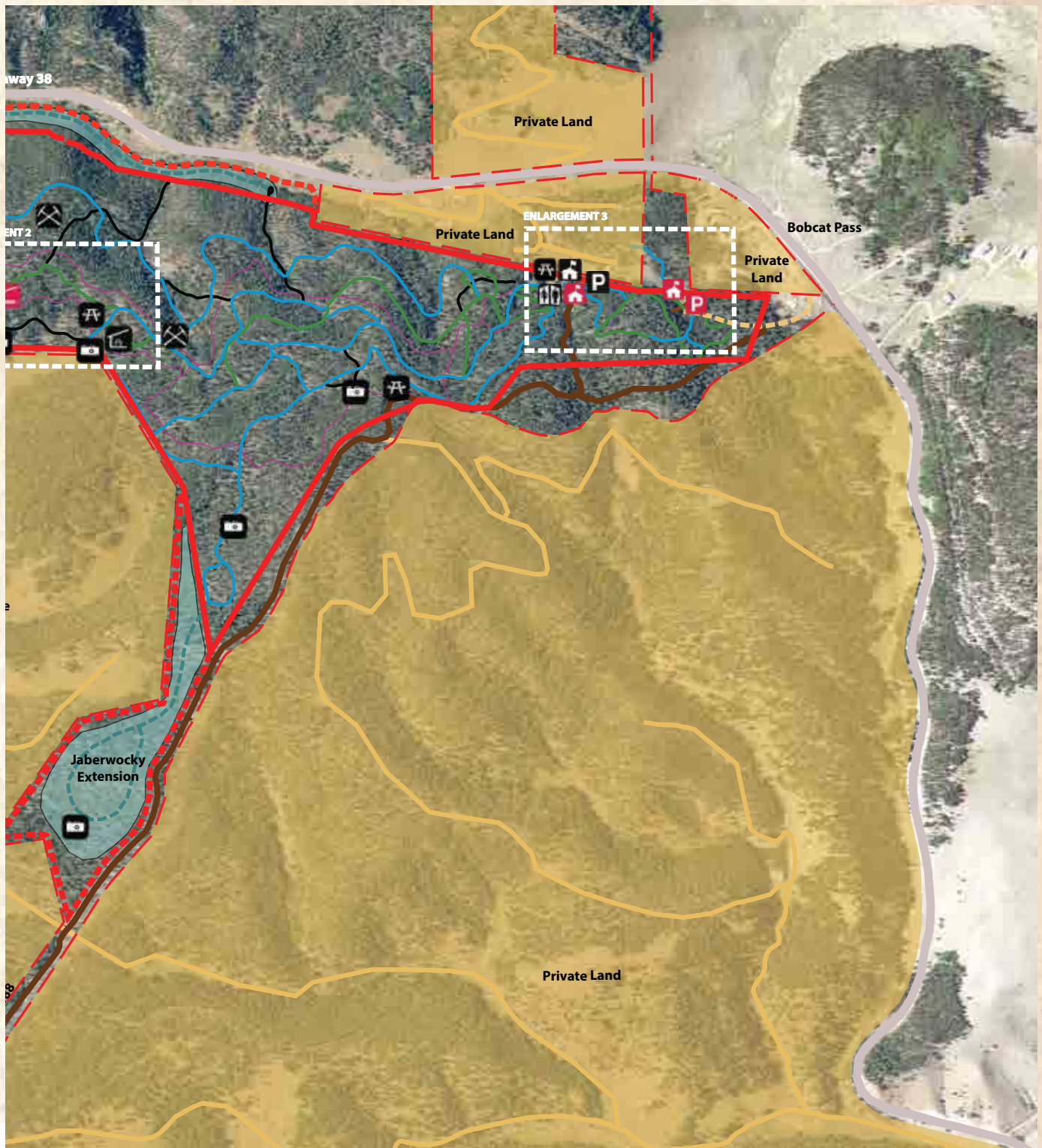
Parking

- State Highway
- Improved Road (Dirt)
- USFS Road
- USFS Boundary
- EF Permit Boundary
- Existing Ski Trail
- Existing Snowshoe Trail



**ENCHANTED FOREST**  
**CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA**





Proposed Yurts



Proposed Parking



Proposed Base Lodge



Proposed Ski Trails Expansion Area



Proposed Future Access Road



Proposed Ski Trail



Proposed Snowshoe/Hiking/Mtn. Bike Trail



Proposed EF Permit Boundary



300 0 300 600  
Feet

## PROPOSED FACILITY EXPANSION PLAN

May 1, 2013





The Proposed Facility Expansion Plan (page 48) describes the recreation and facility improvements proposed by the permit holder over the next ten years. These improvements are intended to enhance the visitor experience and to make the EFXC more competitive in the destination cross-country ski area market. The EFXC's market niche is a wilderness experience in a safe easily accessible environment. Ideally the EFXC would have facilities that complement the natural and recreational qualities of the ski area. See the Proposed Facility Plan on page 48 for these improvements.

### **EXPANDED PERMIT BOUNDARY**

The permit holder would like to expand the permit boundary beyond the current 560-acres to include new snowshoe trails along the west and southwest perimeter. This expansion would constitute about a 20% increase in the size of the permit boundary and would open up tremendous opportunities for winter recreation. The permit boundary expansion is proposed along the northwest slope of the ski area and two parcels of land on either side of the private ranch inholding north of FR 488.

### **WINTER RECREATION**

#### **Expanded Cross Country Ski Trails**

The west side of the ski area offers tremendous opportunities for cross-country ski trail expansion. **Areas have been identified that hold snow for longer periods throughout the winter and that would provide easy trail construction and maintenance.** Two areas in particular provide terrain and a forest setting not found in other parts of the EFXC. Here aspen forests and more open glades afford spectacular views of surrounding peaks and valleys. The distance from the base lodge affords greater solitude in a more remote setting.

This proposal includes the addition of approximately 5 kilometers of new trail located along the west and east sides of the Northwest Passage Trail, expansion of the trail southwest of Long John Trail and additional dog trails. These easier and intermediate trails would not only provide a unique EFXC skiing experience, but they would also provide easily accessed routes for overnight visitors utilizing the proposed yurt(s) at the west end of the ski area. These sites afford great viewing and interpretive opportunities.

Additional cross-country ski trail expansion would include a small loop extension of the Jabberwocky trail to the southwest to a prominent highpoint west of FR 488. This location affords excellent views to the south and west and is easier to access than the far reaches of the Northwest Passage on the west side of the ski area. Another potential trail expansion would occur just outside of the north



*Expanded Cross Country Ski Trails*

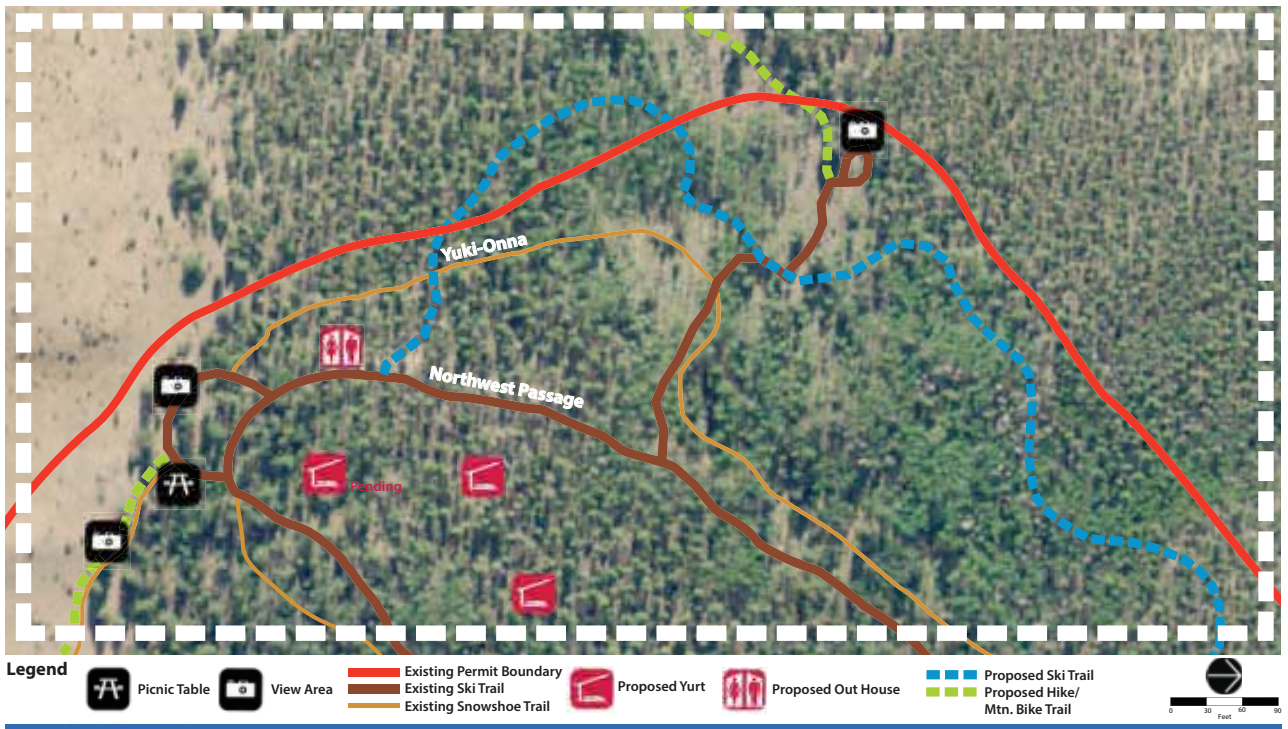
permit boundary above Bobcat Creek. The Abracadabra trail would be extended further down into the drainage and tie into the Tony's Ravine trail via a connector trail above Bobcat Creek. This trail would provide the longest advanced ski loop in the EFXC trail system.

#### **Overnight Yurt Accommodations**

As described in the Comparable Facility Analysis (Section 6) destination cross-country ski areas are becoming increasingly popular. Visitors are looking for the opportunity to immerse themselves in nature off the beaten path. Yurts are economical, easy to erect and are low impact due to their simple substructure. Cross-country ski areas typically develop yurts in small pods of two or three to accommodate groups and large families. The dispersed pods result in fewer impacts to the surrounding environment. Support facilities like restrooms and fire pits can be shared again reducing site impacts.

Proposed improvements to the EFXC include the development of three small yurt pods totaling 6 new yurts. The first of the yurt pods would be located in close proximity to the existing Little John yurt in the center portion of the ski area. Two additional yurt facilities would be provided at this location. Each of the yurts would be nestled into the woods at least 100 feet from existing ski trails as to not block views of other visitors. A second pod of two yurts would be located halfway between the Little John yurt and the western end of the ski area along the Northwest Passage. The yurts would provide overnight accommodations for cross-country skiers, as well as visitors skiing the proposed glade skiing area located along the



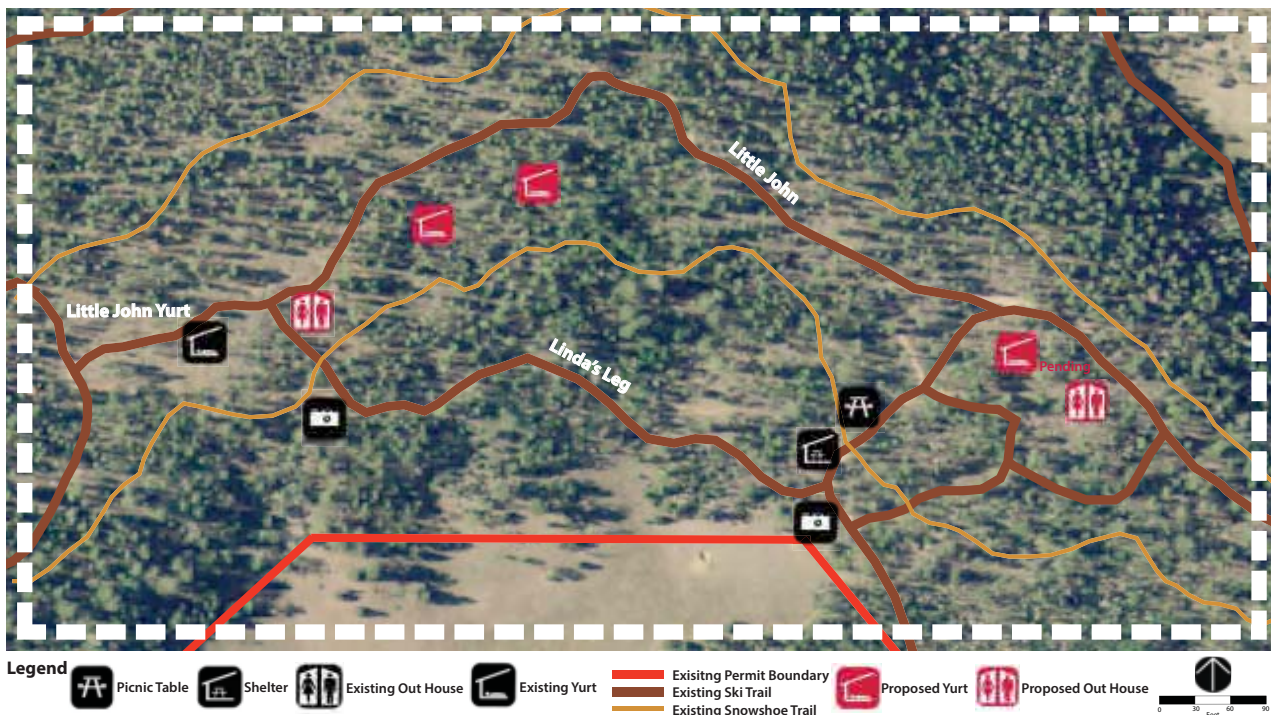


ENCHANTED FOREST  
CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA

### ENLARGEMENT 1



See Proposed Facility Plan on Page 48 for Enlargement 1 Location



ENCHANTED FOREST  
CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA

### ENLARGEMENT 2



See Proposed Facility Plan on Page 48 for Enlargement 2 Location  
Enchantment Forest Cross Country Ski Area - Master Development Plan

February 2019



EFXC's north boundary. The third of the three yurt pods would be located along the Northwest Passage at the far west end of the ski area. Three yurts would be clustered several hundred feet from the trail near the open glades to the southwest.

As the usage of overnight accommodations increases and a market is established for year-round use, more permanent structures like huts might be explored in future MDPs.

The sloped drainages along the EFXC north boundary provide tremendous opportunities for glade skiing (telemark, AT, Rondoney) when the conditions are right. This activity is very low impact and requires few if any facilities. The activity is compatible with cross-country skiing and snowshoeing and there is a lot of cross-over for participants.

### **Glade Skiing**

The EFXC has a unique opportunity to capture a growing market in winter recreation. Back-country skiing is growing in popularity as winter recreationist seek an alternative to crowded and expensive downhill skiing.

The EFXC is proposing a small 15-acre glade skiing area in a large north sloping drainage just west of the Captain Hook and Northwest Passage intersection. This location has some of the deepest and most persistent snow throughout the winter. It is also easily accessed by ski and snowshoe trails.

Glade skiers would purchase trail passes just like cross country skiers. The addition of a small rope tow is also a future consideration.

### **Snow Play Area**

One of the missing winter recreation opportunities at the EFXC is providing a snow play area for families with young children. Most children's interest in cross-country skiing wanes after a very short time. Currently families with young children are relegated to waiting at the base lodge until everyone has finished skiing for the day.

The current lodge and parking configuration does not lend itself to incorporating a snow play area. However, if the base lodge is moved, there are several ideal locations for snow play (See Enlargement 3 on page 56). Each has a significant slope and run-out area for all types of sledding and sliding. One potential snow play area is just west of the existing base lodge above the meadow. Currently this location would interfere with the skiers practice area. The other location is the far north parcel of land north and west of the existing base area. This site would be most suitable with a new lodge facility east of its current location.



*Glade Skiing*



### Ice Skating Pond

Several regional cross-country ski areas have incorporated small outdoor ice skating ponds into the base facility layout. These ponds provide alternative recreation and extend use beyond daylight hours.

Depending upon a reconfigured base area, numerous locations would be suitable for a small skating pond. A 100-foot diameter pond could be incorporated in either of the two meadow locations (see Enlargement 3 on page 56). Construction would require the installation of an impervious liner and a readily available water source. The water requirements for a 1 foot deep 100-foot diameter pond would be 75,000 gallons of water. A much smaller pond is also a consideration depending upon the location and water demand.



*Snow Play Area*



*Ice Skating Pond*



## SUMMER RECREATION

A primary objective of the MDP improvements is to enhance the year-round recreation opportunities and offerings at the EFXC. Summer recreation uses that are compatible with the setting, site resources and the existing/proposed facilities will be promoted. The EFXC's site and proximity to Red River offers tremendous opportunities for the creation of connective trails and shared recreation amenities.

### Expanded Mountain Biking and Hiking Trails

The EFXC would like to expand biking and hiking opportunities to include summer use of existing and newly constructed snowshoe trails along the west and southwest perimeter. In addition, improved connections to existing FS roads are desired. A series of one way loops would be developed incorporating existing and proposed snowshoe trail segments. These loops would get progressively larger the further out the rider/hiker went from the base area. The additions to the loop trail would begin with a single track trail connecting the west end of the existing Northwest Passage trail to FR 488 by way of an old road bed. This trail would descend along existing drainages and open meadows and provide an interesting addition to the EFXC's trails network. An alternative connection to the EFXC can be made by utilizing existing FR 488 (Old Pass Road). While not as remote or interesting, FR 488 does provide a shorter and more direct route to EFXC's base area. In all the loop

trail system would provide users with an 8 mile tour of the EF and surrounding Carson National Forest.

In addition to the loop trail, several smaller single track trails would be added to the system to connect existing snowshoe trails and to access prominent viewpoints (see Proposed Facility Expansion Plan on page 48). In all approximately 4.5 miles of new hiker/biker trail has been identified.

Prior to the development of new trails or the utilization of existing snowshoe trails for mountain biking, all necessary studies including the appropriate archeological, biological and ecological testing would be conducted. Trails would be designed to limit impacts on plants and animals as well as to minimize erosion and maintenance.

### Zip Lines and Canopy Tours

The EFXC would like to offer limited zip line and canopy tours near the proposed yurt and glade skiing. The seasonal operation would be comprised of several zip lines, aerial bridges and platforms. This experience would combine adventure recreation with environmental education. EFXC guides would provide information about the site's wildlife, flora and history. Visitors would be outfitted with helmets, lanyards and trolleys and would be harnessed to a cable throughout the tour. The tours would likely be combined with hiking or biking within the EFXC. Any operation would include a feasibility study and business plan.



*Expanded Mountain Biking Trails*





*Zip Lines and Canopy Tours*

## **FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

### **Access**

Site access is the single most problematic issue confronting the EXFC and is the greatest factor limiting the ski area's growth. The MDP includes two access options to the ski area (see Enlargement 3 on page 56). Option A utilizes the existing access from Sangre de Cristo Road through the Mountain Shadows Subdivision and Option B utilizes USFS land to access Highway 38 near Bobcat Pass.

As described in the Existing Facilities (Chapter 4) access through the Mountain Shadows Subdivision is problematic due to the steepness of the road and its northerly aspect. Access can be very difficult in snowy conditions and is a deterrent for some EFXC visitors. Continued use of this road will necessitate increased plowing and sanding efforts by EFXC or County staff. While not desirable, expanded use of EFXC shuttles or Town shuttles will be necessary if the facility is to continue to grow.

Although access from Bobcat pass has not been utilized in many years, there is a road on USFS property that provides convenient access to the EFXC. In order for access to occur, resolution to existing public/private ownership discrepancies would need to be resolved. An easement through this area would alleviate the EFXC's access issues and provide the connectivity necessary to increase visitation. Access Option B allows for several different base facility design layouts.

### **Parking**

In any expansion scenario the existing parking lot is greatly undersized and severely limits the EFXC's ability to increase skier numbers. During peak use and large events, visitors must park at the overflow lot along Highway 38. All of the proposed base area redevelopment options show the parking lot being expanded from 40 spaces to 75 spaces. Each option utilizes a dirt parking lot on level terrain

within or adjacent to the forest. Parking lots would be designed for easier flow and higher efficiency during peak use periods. Any of the proposed parking concepts would include additional vegetative buffers to screen parking from adjacent homes and access roads.

### **Base Lodge**

Development of a new base lodge is an important component to improving the quality of the visitor experience. The existing lodge does not provide the services or comfort guest have come to expect from a destination cross country ski area. The base lodge is the ski area's front porch and its image reflects greatly on the entire skiing experience. This facility should be welcoming and encourage visitors to extend their stay.

The proposed base facility would provide a greater range of services, increased capacity and better circulation. The facility would incorporate a greatly expanded guest services area including a warming lounge, snack bar and lunch room. The facility would be designed with visitor comfort in mind and would include amenities like a family area, fireplace, comfortable seating areas and indoor restrooms.

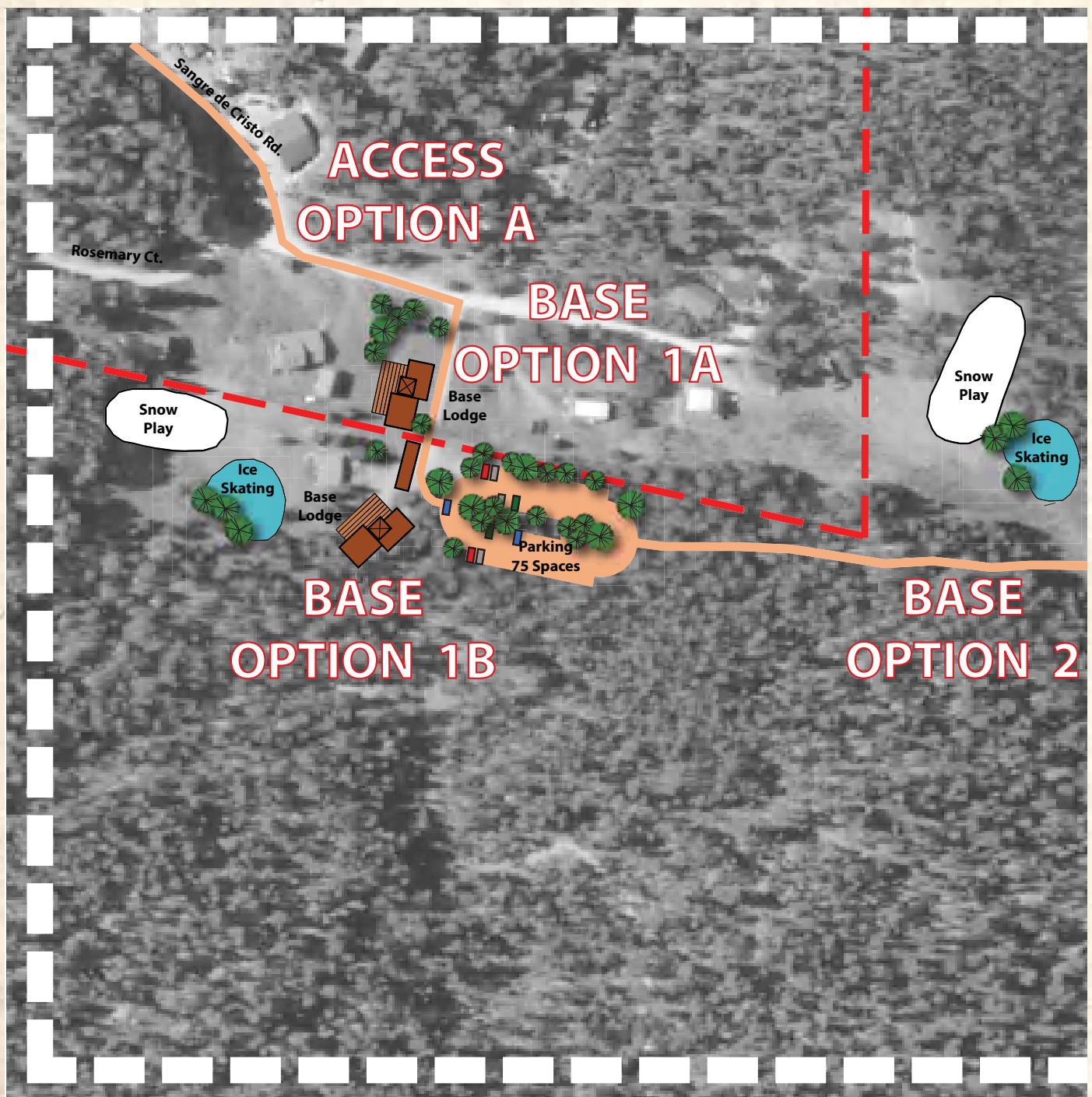
The MDP includes three base lodge redevelopment options depending upon which access is selected. Each of these locations would provide better site planning and organization. In addition, each location would free up additional teaching space in the area of the meadow the existing base lodge occupies. In Option 1A the lodge building would be shifted to the north and east, utilizing the property recently acquired by the permit holder. Option 1B shifts the base lodge to the south along the upper edge of the meadow. Option 2 shifts the base area approximately 700 feet to the east, utilizing the existing dog trails and open meadow.

### **Feasibility of Expansion on Adjacent Private Land**

The current EFXC permit holder owns a 1/2-acre property adjacent to the base area. Facility expansion on this parcel is not feasible due to deed restrictions, poor access and the inability to provide well and septic service on a lot of this size.

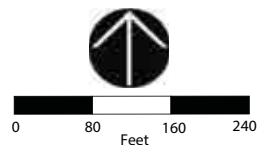
### **Restrooms**

Heated restrooms with indoor plumbing would be included as part of the base lodge redevelopment. Separate men's and women's facilities would be provided along with changing areas. In the short term, restroom facilities throughout the ski area and adjacent to yurts would be screened porta-potty style units. In the long term, restroom facilities would be permanent vault or evaporative type facilities. New outhouse locations have been identified on Enlargements 1 & 2 on page 51.



ENCHANTED FOREST  
CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA





## ENLARGEMENT 3



## Utilities

Domestic water could be supplied to the base lodge from the existing service in the Mountain Shadows subdivision. Waste water service would require the development of a septic field or small treatment facility. Electric service would need to be upgraded to 100 amp three-phase service.

## Camping Platforms

In addition to yurts, the permittee would like to add several camping platforms for year-round visitor use. The platforms would provide low impact camping for those visitors seeking a primitive camping experience. **The platforms would not be permanent structures and would elevate a single tent off the ground. These facilities would not be located in ecologically sensitive areas.**

## OPERATIONS IMPROVEMENTS AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE.

An increase in visitor numbers at the EFXC would necessitate an increase in staffing for all aspects of the operation including, maintenance, grooming, lessons, guest services and routine patrols. In conjunction with a new base lodge, a new maintenance building would be provided near the base area. This facility would consolidate and house all EFXC equipment and supplies. Given the limited expansion of cross-country ski trails, no additional grooming equipment would be necessary.

## MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS

The health of the EFXC's forest is critical to the viability and continued operation of the ski area. EFXC staff will continue to work closely with the USFS to monitor stands, **report poaching, patrol and provide visitor education/contact** and address forest management issues. The EFXC will explore grant programs to study and address forest health. The clearing of dead trees and underbrush will continue to be an important focus of the EFXC. **Managed wood cutting areas and sponsored dead tree removal programs will be implemented.**

Illegal timber cutting within the permit area will be addressed through better signage, management and enforcement by the USFS **and the permittee**. A management approach should be established with the EFXC that provides clear regulations, monitoring and protocols for reporting violations.

While cattle grazing has not occurred within the EFXC permit boundary in many years, potential grazing operations should be evaluated and managed to minimize

conflicts. The permittee would like the USFS to evaluate the need for grazing permits within the EFXC boundary.

## MDP PHASING

The EFXC envisions implementation of the proposed improvements over the next decade. The first priority would be an expansion of recreation offerings/programs with a greater emphasis on year-round use. As visitor numbers increase, the priority would shift to the implementation of new facilities. The EFXC anticipates MDP phasing as follows:

### PHASING PLAN

#### 1-3 Years

- Additional Yurts with Outhouses
- Camping Platforms
- Implementation of Snowshoe/Biking Trails
- Expanded Cross Country Ski Trails
- Glade Skiing
- Zip Lines and Canopy Tours

#### 3-7 Years

- New Site Access
- New Parking Area
- Ice Skating Pond

#### 7-10 Years

- New Base Lodge
- Expanded Snow Play Area



## Chapter 9:

### Partnerships and Economic Development



*Environmental Education*

## ***PARTNERSHIPS***

Healthy partnerships can make the difference between a really successful recreation facility and one that is not valued highly by its community. Partners collaborate on construction, maintenance and promotion issues and help involve the local community.

### **Collaborating for Success**

The EFXC is located within a larger context of neighbors, communities and adjacent agencies. Collaboration with these groups can provide an advocacy and support structure that is stronger than what any one entity can provide. The more people interested in the EF, the more the facility will be utilized, valued and maintained.

Furthermore, additional fiscal resources are available beyond traditional funding by working with partners to raise funds

Guidelines for forming and maintaining successful partnerships follow.

Stakeholders: Identify all parties that hold a stake in the recreation facility. Examples are:

- USFS – Collaborative Forest Restoration Program
- New Mexico Department of Transportation
- Town of Red River
- Chamber of Commerce
- Southwest Nordic Ski Clubs and similar organizations
- Southwest Conservation Corps, Amigos Bravos
- Philmont Scout Ranch
- Trail and Biking Clubs and Advocacy Groups
- Concessionaires
- Businesses
- Civic Organizations

**Multiple Use:** Find opportunities for creating shared facilities with shared maintenance and construction costs.

**Education:** Engage local schools and nature groups to create educational programs that involve the EF

**Volunteers:** Create Adopt-A-Trail program to attract local sponsorship. This program would organize volunteers to build and maintain trails.

**Community:** Accommodate neighboring landowners and the community by working with them on the recreation facility development.

**Common Ground:** Establish goals, actions and policies that mutually benefit all partners.

## ***ECONOMICS OF FACILITY DEVELOPMENT***

Ultimately the success of the EFXC as a destination multi-use recreation facility will provide economic benefits throughout the Red River Community. Visitors will discover the region and seek a wide range of goods and services from area businesses.

Homes in the Mountain Shadows subdivision and across NM 38 will be desired specifically for their proximity to the Enchanted Forest. In all likelihood, the EFXC will increase property values in Mountain Shadows.

Most importantly expansion of the EFXC will result in additional jobs for the community.