

1.4 PURPOSE AND NEED

Lee Canyon agrees with and is supportive of the overall purpose and need. The purpose and need discusses “*growing recreational demand from Las Vegas and the surrounding area*” The last significant expansion of facilities at the ski area occurred in the late 1960’s to early 1970’s. Since that time, the Las Vegas population has multiplied over five times and continues to grow. This population growth along with increased numbers of people participating in outdoor recreation activities has resulted in significant growth in visitors to Lee Canyon who would be better served with additional facilities. The purpose and need also discusses “*Develop year-round recreational opportunities to meet increasing demand by recreationists of various types and skill levels.*” There has been tremendous growth nationally and locally in activities such as mountain biking with now approximately 40 million mountain bikers nationally. Adding summer recreational opportunities will allow other user groups to be able to utilize and enjoy Lee Canyon.

2.8 AGENCY’S PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Lee Canyon’s preferred alternative is the BCT alternative for the following reasons.

- The no action alternative does not address any of the three key parts of the purpose and need listed below

Update and renovate ski area infrastructure, particularly run-down base facilities, to meet current standards and the expectations of today’s recreation market.

Improve balance on several levels: between lift and run capacity, between on-mountain and base-area capacity, and between overall ski area capacity and growing recreational demand from Las Vegas and the surrounding area.

Develop year-round recreational opportunities to meet increasing demand by recreationists of various types and skill levels.

- The BCT alternative addresses all three keys parts of the purpose and need.
- The BCT alternative includes a buffer between the BCT and new ski run construction
- The BCT alternative eliminates the winter user’s conflict that exists between the BCT and the last chance ski run that overlap in places. This issue exists in both the original proposed action and the no action alternative.

3.6.3.2.1 Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species

Lee Canyon overall agrees with the methodology that has been applied to calculate the potential impact on the MCBB if a mountain biker were to fall off a trail into a buffer area around suitable habitat for the MCBB. We however believe the incident rate listed in the below paragraph may be somewhat overstated

10 incidents per day. In order to directly impact the MCBB, these accidents would have to occur within the approximately 1.7 percent of the trail system that would be within 8 meters (5 meter buffer plus a 3 meter accident impact area) of suitable habitat.

Our understanding is most of the suitable habitat areas are in more open areas, such as ski runs. Bike trails will usually be going in a straight line, traversing a ski run rather than having any corners. This should greatly decrease the likely hood of a biker falling in these areas.

3.6.5 MITIGATION

Lee Canyon would like to see additional clarification regarding mitigation measures in the final EIS. Specifically line item 15 is somewhat vague with what would be defined as “plow/blow”

15. Do not plow/blow snow into areas of suitable habitat.

3.11.3.2 Proposed Action

Lee Canyon agrees that there is currently a congestion problem on highway 156 on peak days, primarily in the Lee meadows area. Lee Canyon has worked with the Mt Charleston Winter Alliance over the last few years to look for ways to reduce the issue. Visitors to the ski area in general are looking to get to and from the ski area rather than finding a parking space somewhere on highway 156 and in our opinion are not a large factor in the congestion. We also believe expanding parking at the ski area by 500 spaces whilst only increasing the number of cars for ski visits by 388 will provide the opportunity for other visitors to Lee Canyon to park in a designated parking space and also utilizes facilities such as restrooms