Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

MEPA NEPA Checklist

MISSION. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, through its employees and citizen commission, provides for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks and recreational resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations

All Montanans have the right to live in a clean and healthful environment. This environmental analysis is intended to provide an evaluation of the likely impacts to the human environment from proposed actions of the project cited below. This analysis will help Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to fulfill its oversight obligations and satisfy rules and regulations of both the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Please provide a discussion for each section. If no impacts are likely, be sure to discuss the reasoning that led to your determination.

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed action.

Development	_____
Renovation	_____
Maintenance	___X____
Land Acquisition	_____
Equipment Acquisition	_____
Other (Describe)	_____

2. If appropriate, agency responsible for the proposed action.
   State of Montana statutes that relate to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Chapter 2, Part 1 statutes relating to Recreation: MCA 23-2-101, and Part 6 statutes relating to snowmobiling: MCA 23-2-106 to 23-2-656.
   State of Montana statutes that relate to Montana Environmental Policy Act: MCA 75-1-101 to 75-1-1112.

3. Name, address of project sponsor.
   Big Sky Snowriders, PO Box 365, Livingston, MT, 59047

4. Name of project.
   Big Sky Snowriders Trail System.

5. If applicable:

Estimated construction/commencement date
Trail Grooming, December 1 through March 31

Estimated completion date: Ongoing Maintenance Project

Current status of project design (100% complete)

6. Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township).
Park County – T3N, R10E; T4N, R10E; T5N, R10E; T6S, R10E

7. Project size: estimate the numbers of acres that would be directly affected that are currently: **Groomed trail located on approximately (54) miles of existing roads and trails.**

(a) Developed:
residential..... 0 acres
industrial ..... 0 acres

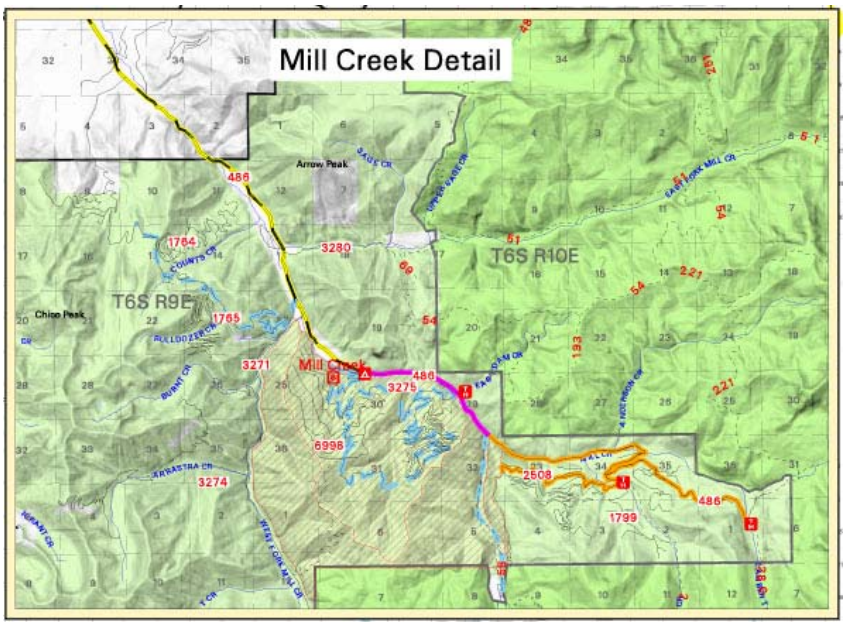
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation..... 0 acres

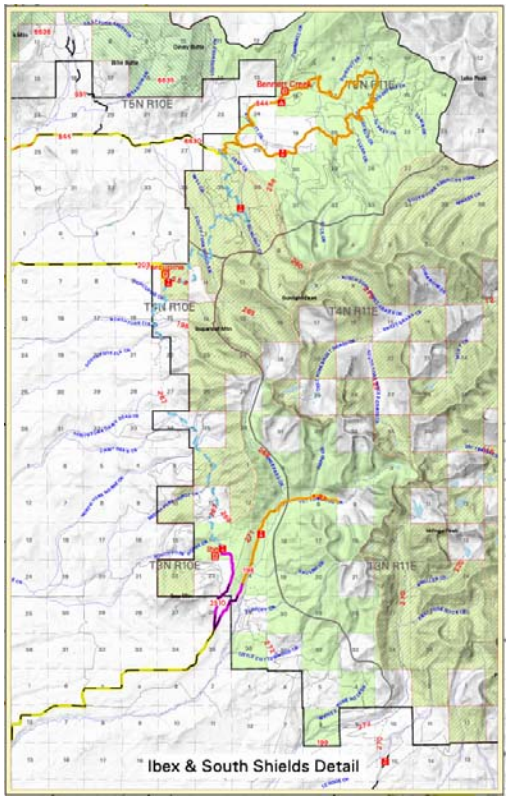
(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas ..... 0 acres

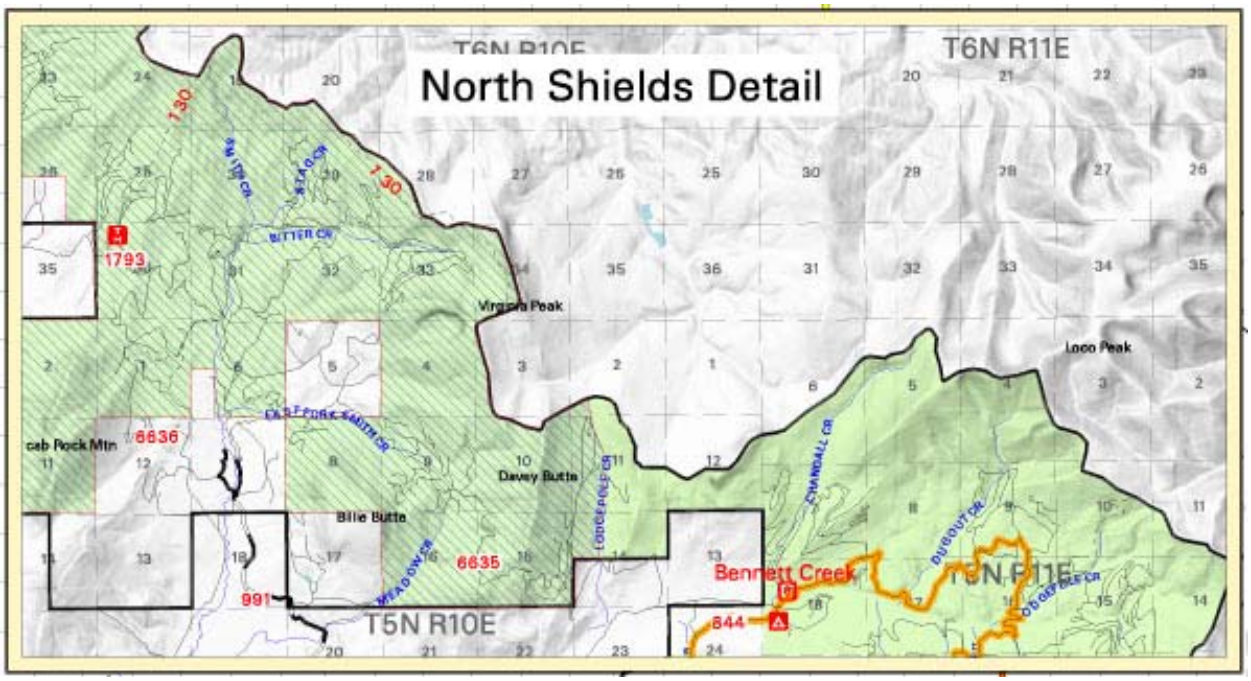
(d) Floodplain ..... 0 acres

(e) Productive:
irrigated cropland..... 0 acres
dry cropland ..... 0 acres
forestry ..... 0 acres
rangeland..... 0 acres
other..... 0 acres

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.







- Groomed Snowmobile Trail
- Marked Snowmobile Trail
- Groomed Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe Trail
- Marked Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe Trail
- Marked Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe Trail - Snowmobiling Prohibited
- Snowmobile, Cross Country Ski, and Snowshoe Trail
- Plowed Road
- Designated Motorized Route Through Winter Closure
- Area Closed Yearlong to Snowmobiling Except on Designated Routes
- Area Closed Seasonally to Snowmobiling October 15 to December 1
- Highway - US or State
- Access to Forest Road
- Road
- National Forest System Trail
- Forest Service Campground
- Forest Service Trailhead
- Forest Service Picnic Area
- Forest Service Cabin
- Travel Planning Area Boundary
- Gallatin National Forest Boundary
- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- National Forest System Land
- NFS Land - Wilderness (motorized and mechanized travel prohibited year round)

N

Scale - Detail Maps

0 5 kilometers

0 5 miles

Scale - Main Map

0 10 kilometers

0 10 miles

final_winter

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action.

FWP proposes to award a Montana State Snowmobile Program Grant to the Big Sky Snowriders for the purpose of continuing grooming maintenance activities on the existing groomed trail system which is over authorized trails or roads located on lands of the Gallatin National Forest.

This environmental review focuses on snowmobile trail grooming operations and maintenance within the Big Sky Snowriders groomed trail system which is funded from the state snowmobile gas tax. The broader scope of issues was adequately addressed in previous environmental review document(s) that include the Montana Snowmobile Grant Program PEIS and the 1996 environmental review of the Big Sky Snowriders groomed trail system.

A Challenge Cost Share (CCS) Agreement was updated in 2008. The CCS agreement complies annually with MEPA and NEPA requirements under the Montana Snowmobile Grant Program (PEIS). Exhibit A of the CCS Agreement, the Operating Plan, is updated annually and will be revised for those existing snowmobile trails established on existing roads and trails. The agreement will be in effect for a period of five (5) years or until one party calls for the termination of the agreement or there is a significant change from the current situation.

Site-specific analysis is the responsibility of the land management agency. The U.S. Forest Service has completed this analysis in the 2006 Gallatin Forest Travel Plans and determined that maintenance of existing federal roads and trails are categorically excluded under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In 1992, the Washington Office of the Forest Service issued amendment 1909.15-92-1 to FSH 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook. This amendment clarified categorical exclusions. One item clarified was grooming. This amendment lists those categories which,

> "At the discretion of the responsible official, a project or case file and a decision memo are not required but may be prepared for categories of actions set forth in sections 21.la and 31.1b. (Section 31.1)

Section 31.lb lists those categories established by the Chief as,

> Categorically excluded from documentation in an EIS or EA unless scoping indicates extraordinary circumstances exist.

Listed under Item 31.lb is item 4.d,

> "Pruning vegetation and cleaning culverts along a trail and grooming the surface of the trail.

Each of the groomed trails occurs on Forest Service system roads that are located in areas allocated to winter motorized recreational use in the 2006 Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan.

10. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the MEPA-required no action alternative). At a minimum, the following three alternatives must be presented.

a). Preferred Alternative: continue grooming program with stipulated mitigative measures. Under this alternative the grooming grant would be awarded. The grant would require those mitigative measures outlined in the 1996 Environmental Review's Enforcement/Education plan and Administrative strategies to continue.

b). No-action Alternative: Under this alternative, Fish, Wildlife and Parks would continue the program as currently administered. The environmental, social and economic conditions that currently exist as a result of the program would not change; current levels of administration and management efforts would be retained; and the application preparation and review processes would continue.

c). Additional Alternatives: discontinuation of grooming grant. Under this alternative the grooming grant would be withdrawn from the Big Sky Snowriders.

Environmental consequences of this alternative.

- The economies of Livingston could be reduced during the winter months because of novice to intermediate riders not coming. This would likely result in significant negative impacts on the annual income of several individuals and families in the area.
- Snowmobiling would continue.
- Trail safety review could diminish to a point where public safety is compromised.
- Trail hazards would not be identified or resolved by the snowmobile club or FWP.
- Visitor education efforts by FWP in the Livingston area would diminish.
- Reduced law enforcement presence. The enforcement presences by FWP would be only for state statutes (DUI, vehicle registration, and fish & wildlife regulations).
- Community may groom trails without direction or funding input from state.

11. Listing of each local, state or federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits		
Agency Name: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Gallatin National Forest,	Permit: Challenge Cost Share Agreement Exhibit A: Annual Financial and Operating Plan	Date Filed: 2007

(b) Funding	
Agency Name: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Funding Amount: $ 5,775

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities	
Agency Name: Park County Commissioners	Type of Responsibility: Land Management Agency

12. List of agencies consulted during preparation of this Environmental Checklist:

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Gallatin National Forest

Name of Preparer(s) of this Environmental Checklist:

Ray Heagney
Region Three Snowmobile Grant Program Coordinator.
406-994-6934
rheagney@mt.gov

14. Date submitted. April 1, 2008

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Land Resources" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on land resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects of the action as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

1. LAND RESOURCES **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other		X				

a., b., c.: Snowmobile trail grooming has no direct influence or contact on the geologic substructure of the area.
d.: Snowmobile trail grooming takes place on established (engineered) roads away from streams, rivers, and lakes.
e.: The likelihood of a trail groomer causing earthquakes or other major changes in landmass is improbable.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Air" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on air resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects of the action as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. Any discharge that will conflict with federal or state air quality regs?		X				
f. Other		X				

a. & b., e.: The trail grooming operations employs either gas or diesel vehicles to conduct trail maintenance. These vehicles are required to be maintained under state guidelines and are anticipated to operate in an efficient manner.

c.: It is improbable that trail grooming in the Livingston area plays major role climate changes on a local or regional basis.
d.: Trail grooming is conducted over established forest roads away from vegetation.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Water" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on water resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

3. WATER **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. Effects to a designated floodplain?		X				
m. Any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations?		X				
n. Other:		X				

a. Thru m.: Trail grooming is the manipulation of the crystalline form of water on engineered forest roads. Low ambient temperatures throughout the winter months disallow the excessive run-off of water along groomed trails. Conditions within the snow pack are subject to melt-freeze process. This condition leads to a higher stability of the snow pack. Therefore, it is improbable that this natural physical process of snow-dynamics will change watershed hydrology.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Vegetation" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on vegetative resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
f. Effects to wetlands or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

a. Thru f.: Due to the depth of the snow pack on the established engineered forest roads vegetation of any kind is likely to remain in place and will reestablish itself along these corridors. These trails/ or established engineered forest roads are not located near any wetlands or farmland.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Fish/Wildlife" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on fish and wildlife resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed**.**

5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. Adverse effects to threatened/endangered species or their habitat?		X				
i. Introduction or exportation of any species not presently or historically occurring in the affected location?		X				
j. Other:		X				

a. Thru i.: Groomed trails are proposed for over established engineered forest roads, that were constructed several decades ago prior to the state-grooming program. Though these corridors are adjacent to public lands there are no impact to any wildlife species either introduced or native.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Noise/Electrical Effects" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects of noise and electrical activities. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

a. Thru d.: Grooming equipment used over authorized trail corridors is operated away from residences and the community. There is no detrimental increase to decimal levels.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Land Use" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on land use. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. A conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. A conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on, or relocation of, residences?		X				
e. Compliance with existing land policies for land use, transportation, and open space?		Yes				Yes
f. Increased traffic hazards, traffic volume, or speed limits or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
g. Other:		X				

a. Thru f.: Grooming of the authorized trail corridors does not conflict with land management practices and complies with current Gallatin National Forest "Travel Plan" strategies for public use.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Risk/Health Hazards" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects of risks and health hazards. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects of the action as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Effects on existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. Disturbance to any sites with known or potential deposits of hazardous materials?		X				
e. The use of any chemical toxicants?		X				
f. Other:		X				

a. Thru e.: Grooming equipment normally operates on either gas or diesel. Requirements of the Montana Snowmobile Trail Grooming program requires that all state owned equipment must be maintained in order to run efficiently

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Community Impact" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on the community. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

a. Thru d.: There are no alterations to the community profile from grooming activities.
e.: Groomed are design not to conflict with either pedestrian or other motor vehicle travel patterns.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Public Services/Taxes/Utilities" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on public services, taxes and utilities. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. An effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered, governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If so, specify:		X				
b. Effects on the local or state tax base and revenues?			X			
c. A need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. Other.		X				
Additional information requested:						
f. Define projected revenue sources.	Increased revenue will be potentially derived from accommodations tax.					
g. Define projected maintenance costs.	No additional maintenance costs are projected for this grooming program.					

a., c., and d.: No additional costs or impacts are associated to any of the services listed.
e.: Increased revenue will be potentially derived from accommodations tax.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Aesthetics/Recreation" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on aesthetics & recreation. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				
d. Adverse effects to any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas?		X				
e. Other:		X				

a. Thru d.: No alterations to the listed items will occur, due to the fact that trail grooming limited under the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan.

- **Groomed trails, which terminate near a wilderness boundary do not promote wilderness incursion by motorized recreationist. Any incursion by snowmobilers is a decision and action made solely by the operator. Wilderness boundaries are signed making the snowmobiler fully aware that it is illegal to enter a wilderness area via a snowmobile or any other motorized vehicle. It is the operator's responsibility of the motor vehicle to know where their located in relationship to the wilderness boundary.**

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Cultural/historical Resources" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on cultural/historical resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical changes that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. Adverse effects to historic or cultural resources?		X				
e. Other:		X				

a. Thru d.: Grooming operations only effects the crystalline structure of the snow pack on those trails/road, which are authorized under the current Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Summary Evaluation of Significance" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects. Even if you have checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?			X			
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. Have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy?		X				
Additional information requested:						
g. List any federal or state permits required.	Challenge Cost Share Agreement, Financial & Operations Agreement, Project Agreement. These are currently up to date and in affect.					

a.: The grooming of authorized trials does not significantly or cumulatively impact the Natural or Human environment.
b.: One potential risk involves the existence of the exposure to avalanches. This risk applies to any winter use on slopes greater than 30°
c.: Grooming operations does not conflict with any local, state or federal laws, in effect is promotes cooperation between agencies.
d.: The routine grooming operations have not created any significant impacts over the course of the past 40 years.

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST CONCLUSION SECTION

1. Discuss the cumulative and secondary effects of this project as a whole. These are impacts to the human environment that, individually, may be minor for a specific project, but, when considered in combination to other actions, may result in significant impacts.

2. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this Environmental Checklist (Part II), is an EIS required?

   YES _____

   NO __X___

   If an EIS is not required, explain why the current checklist level of review is appropriate.

3. **Public Comment.** At minimum, public input to the proposed project must be solicited through a legal ad in a daily newspaper with widest circulation in the immediate project area. This ad must run for a minimum of one day with at least 30 days allowed for public comment. The ad must include a brief description of the proposed project with the name, address, and contact information of the project sponsor. Comments should be provided in writing. The public comment period for this project must have occurred within 24 months (2 years) of the grant submission deadline.

   a). Please include a photocopy of the legal advertisement, showing the date on which it ran in the newspaper.

   b). Describe the total public involvement for this project beyond the legal ad. Projects may not be planned in isolation. The general public, adjacent landowners, and other interested parties should be involved from the onset. Promotion of public participation may be through newspaper articles and any other means available, such as public meetings, federal quarterly newsletters, TV programs, radio announcements, etc.

4. **Public Input Summary.** Please describe the nature of the public comments received during the official public comment period. Tally numbers of comments in support of the project and the numbers against. Summarize the most important comments received and your response to these comments. For example, if a reviewer made suggestions on how the project could be made better, how did you respond to that suggestion?

a). Provide copies of all comments received.

b). Changes to project design or scope of work based on public input.

CHALLENGE COST-SHARE AGREEMENT
Between the
BIG SKY SNOWRIDERS SNOWMOBILE CLUB
And the
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
And the
USDA FOREST SERVICE, GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST

This Challenge Cost-share Agreement (agreement), is hereby made and entered into by and between the Big Sky Snowriders Snowmobile Club, hereinafter referred to as the Club; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, hereinafter referred to as FWP; and the USDA Forest Service, Gallatin National Forest, hereinafter referred to as the Forest Service, under the provisions of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, Public Law 102-154, and Montana Code 23, Chapter 2. The Club and FWP may jointly be referred to as Cooperator(s).

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to document the cooperation between the parties for the operation and maintenance of groomed snowmobile trails on the Livingston Ranger District of the Gallatin National Forest as shown in the hereby incorporated Annual Financial and Operating Plan attached as Exhibit A.

II. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL INTERESTS AND BENEFITS:

The Club has a specific interest in maintaining a system of groomed snowmobile trails in the area and is interested in supporting this program by performing trail grooming using funds from FWP.

FWP controls State funds earmarked for the development and maintenance of snowmobile trails and is interested in providing funds and technical assistance to the Club's snowmobile grooming program.

The Forest Service is authorized by Acts of Congress and by regulations issued by the Secretary of Agriculture to regulate the occupancy and use of National Forest System (NFS) lands. The Forest Service is also charged with providing a wide range of recreation opportunities compatible with other uses.

All of the parties have a mutual interest in working together to develop and maintain snowmobile recreation resources.

In consideration of the above premises, the parties agree as follows:

III. THE CLUB SHALL:

A. Perform in accordance with the Annual Financial and Operating Plan, Exhibit A.

B. Annually submit an application to FWP for the Snowmobile Grooming Program Grant.

C. Meet with the Forest Service and FWP to develop an Annual Financial and Operating Plan showing grooming routes, schedules, signing, and Club officers. Annually submit the Annual Financial and Operating Plan to Forest Service and FWP by May 1.

D. Request an advance of 75% of approved Snowmobile Grooming Program Grant funds from FWP in November and request the balance of grant funds as needed. Total of advances and reimbursements shall not exceed the annual grant amount for any snow season. The Club shall itemize all expenditures including documentation, and submit to FWP by May 1 of each year.

E. Provide trail use counter information to the Forest Service and FWP as requested.

F. On behalf of the Club, voluntarily seek, accept, and expend funds from other sources to support the trail system.

G. Agree that any Club employees and volunteers shall not be deemed to be Federal employees for any purposes including Chapter 171 of Title 28, United States Code (Federal Tort Claims Act) and Chapter 81 of Title 5, United States Code (OWCP), as the Club has hereby willingly agreed to assume these responsibilities.

H. Provide any necessary training to Club volunteers and ensure that such personnel are capable of performing tasks to be completed.

IV. THE FWP SHALL:

A. Perform in accordance with the Annual Financial and Operating Plan, Exhibit A.

B. Review grant applications submitted by the Club for approval.

C. Through their Snowmobile Grooming Program Grant process, authorize expenditure of Montana State administered funds by the Club for the operation and maintenance of the grooming program on designated trails. This authorization will be based on the grooming schedule and maintenance needs submitted by the Club as part of their annual grant application to FWP for trail maintenance and grooming.

D. As approved by FWP, provide 75% of approved Snowmobile Grooming Program Grant funds in November and the balance upon request in accordance with the terms of the grant. *See related provision III-D.*

V. THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL:

A. Perform in accordance with the Annual Financial and Operating Plan, Exhibit A.

B. Allow use of designated roads and trails, as specifically identified on the snowmobile trail map, Exhibit B, for the snowmobile grooming program.

C. As appropriations and regulation allow, provide funds and personnel to assist the Club with the snowmobile program.

VI. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT:

A. PRINCIPAL CONTACTS. The principal contacts for this agreement are:

FS Project Contact
Wendi Urie
USDA Forest Service
Livingston Ranger District
5242 Highway 89 South
Livingston, MT 59047
Phone: 406-222-1892
FAX: 406-222-2546
Email: wurie@fs.fed.us

FWP Project Contact
Ray Heagney
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 S 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718
Phone: 406-994-6934
FAX: 406-994-4090
Email: rheagney@mt.gov

Club Project Contact
Jeremy Faturous
Big Sky Snowriders
PO Box 365
Livingston, MT 59047
Phone: (406) 223-5055
Email: jeremyfatouros@hotmail.com

FS Administrative Contact
Judith Lang
USDA Forest Service
PO Box 130, Federal Building
Bozeman, MT 59771
Phone: 406-587-6713
FAX: 406-587-6758
Email: jlang@fs.fed.us

B. All parties will make themselves available annually by April 1, to discuss the conditions covered by this agreement, and to coordinate any activities pursuant to this agreement including, but not limited to, the joint development of an Annual Financial and Operating Plan.

C. The Annual Financial and Operating Plan shall:
- Contain specific language stating that the Annual Financial and Operating Plan is being added to this agreement thereby subjecting it to the terms of this agreement.
- Be completed by May 1 of each year.
- Include the names of members of the Grooming Committee.
- Designate grooming routes, signing, and schedules.
- Include a snowmobile trail map showing designated routes.
- Be reviewed and approved by a Forest Service Grants and Agreements Specialist.
- Be mutually agreed to, in writing, by all parties.

D. It is the intent of this agreement that the parties will modify this agreement with an updated Annual Financial and Operating Plan, attached as Exhibit A. There is no obligation for any party to provide funds or work other then that which has been mutually agreed to in the approved Annual Financial and Operating Plan.

E. The latest revision of the mutually approved Annual Financial and Operating Plan will be incorporated into this agreement through formal modification as defined in Provision VI-P of this agreement.

F. The latest revision of the mutually approved snowmobile trail map will be incorporated into this agreement without formal modification as provided in Provision VI-P of this agreement.

G. Improvements such as warming huts, groomer sheds, and kiosks are not to be authorized under this agreement. A separate application/authorization must be completed for these improvements. Such authorization will address ownership, tenure, and maintenance and operation responsibilities among other items.

H. FUNDING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES. Federal Funding under this agreement is not available for reimbursement of Cooperator purchase of equipment.

I. NONDISCRIMINATION. The cooperators shall comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination and all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, Executive orders, regulations, and policies. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, 2000e-16), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, disability, or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended (29 U.S.C. 794) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities. The nondiscrimination statement which follows shall be posted in primary and secondary cooperator offices, at the public service delivery contact point and included, in full, on all materials regarding such recipients'/cooperators' programs that are produced by the cooperators for public information, public education, or public distribution:

> "In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)
>
> To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

If the material is too small to permit the full statement to be included, the material will at minimum include the statement, in print size no smaller than the text, that "This institution is an equal opportunity provider."

J. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA). Any information furnished to the Forest Service under this agreement is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S. C. 552).

K. RETENTION AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR RECORDS. The Forest Service, Inspector General, or Comptroller General, through any authorized representative, shall have access to and the right to examine all records related to this agreement. As used in this provision, "records" includes books, documents, accounting procedures and practices, and other data, regardless of type and regardless of whether such items are in written form, in the form of computer data, or in any other form. All records pertinent to the award shall be retained for a period of three years.

L. LEGAL AUTHORITY. The Cooperators have the legal authority to enter into this agreement, and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay nonfederal share of project costs) to ensure proper planning, management, and completion of the project.

M. PARTICIPATION IN SIMILAR ACTIVITIES. This agreement in no way restricts the Forest Service, or the Cooperators from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.

N. ENDORSEMENT. Any Cooperator contributions made under this agreement do not by direct reference or implication convey Forest Service endorsement of the Cooperators' products or activities.

O. ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION. In the event of any issue of controversy under this agreement, the parties may pursue Alternate Dispute Resolution procedures to voluntarily resolve those issues. These procedures may include, but are not limited to, conciliation, mediation, and fact finding.

P. MODIFICATION. Modifications within the scope of this agreement shall be made by mutual consent of the parties, by the issuance of a written modification, signed and dated by all parties, prior to any changes being performed. The Forest Service is not obligated to fund any changes not properly approved in advance.

Q. TERMINATION. Any party, in writing, may terminate this agreement in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration. No party shall incur any new obligations for the terminated portion of this agreement after the effective date of termination and shall cancel as many obligations as possible. Full credit shall be allowed for each party's expenses and all non-cancelable obligations properly incurred up to the effective date of termination.

R. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES. By signature below, each Cooperator certifies that the individuals listed in this document as representatives of the individual Cooperator are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this agreement.

S. COMMENCEMENT/EXPIRATION DATE. This agreement is executed as of the date of the last signature and is effective through **May 1, 2012**, at which time it will expire.

The authority and format of this agreement has been reviewed and approved for signature.

/s/ Judith M. Lang	*December 13, 2007*
Grants and Agreements Specialist	Date

In witness whereof, the parties hereto have executed the agreement as of the last date written below.

JEREMY FATOUROS, President Big Sky Snowriders Snowmobile Club	12-18-07 Date
PATRICK J. FLOWERS, Regional Supervisor Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	1/3/08 Date
MARY C. ERICKSON, Forest Supervisor USDA Forest Service, Gallatin National Forest	1-18-08 Date

EXHIBIT A

FY2008
ANNUAL FINANCIAL AND OPERATING PLAN

This Annual Financial and Operating Plan is hereby made and entered into by and between the Big Sky Snowriders Snowmobile Club (Club), Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), and the USDA Forest Service, Gallatin National Forest (Forest Service) as specified under the provisions of Challenge Cost Share Agreement #08-CS-11011102-007.

I. The Club shall:

A. Be responsible for operational maintenance and grooming of the trail system as well as plowing out the trailhead parking facilities.

B. Begin trail grooming after January 1, when there is adequate snow cover. Provide trail grooming once a week, more or less, depending upon the suitability of snow conditions and availability of funds to fund snowmobile grooming.

C. Perform snowmobile grooming in accordance with grooming guidelines, performance standards and safety in accordance with appropriate FWP standards and the USDA Forest Service Handbook 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook.

D. Remove any trees or obstacles leaning into or across the groomed trail. Additional limbing of trees encroaching the trail corridor may be necessary as the snow pack increases over the course of the season. Tree limbs will be cut flush with the trunk of the tree. The Club will notify the Forest Service when trails need brushing, so the work may be included in the summer road brushing contract. Assist the Forest Service with off-season trail maintenance, as mutually agreed to, to keep snowmobile trails open.

E. Contact the Forest Service Office after each trail has been groomed such that current grooming reports can be made available to the public.

F. At the end of the season, prepare an inventory of gate maintenance, hazards, and signing needs for the Forest Service. The Club will inventory signs (reassurance blazers, turn arrows and warning signs) on hand and include a replacement order with the grant application to the FWP.

II. The FWP shall:

A. Provide funds for grooming as specified in master agreement.

B. Provide technical assistance to the Club to help ensure compliance with the terms of the Snowmobile Grooming Program Grant.

C. Monitor the snowmobile grooming for compliance in accordance with grooming guidelines, performance standards and safety in accordance with appropriate FWP standards and the USDA Forest Service Handbook 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook.

D. Provide signs such as reassurance blazers, turn arrows, and warning signs, consistent with FWP Snowmobile Program Operations Manual.

E. Coordinate with land management agencies on the implementation of snow grooming activities.

III. The Forest Service shall:

A. Develop a sign plan for the snowmobile trails and trailheads for the groomed trails. The sign plan will comply with sign warrants and EM-7100-15, Standards for Forest Service Signs and Posters.

B. Furnish required signs not provided by FWP.

C. At their discretion, perform off-season maintenance activities on designated trails. Maintenance may include brushing, erosion control, etc. and will be in accordance with the guidelines in the Forest Service Handbook 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook.

D. Monitor the snowmobile grooming for compliance with grooming guidelines, performance standards and safety in accordance with the USDA Forest Service Handbook 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook and appropriate FWP standards.

IV. It is mutually agreed that the parties shall:

A. Prior to grooming, coordinate gate closing with the Forest Service and other landowners. Properly sign all affected gates indicating seasonal change in travel management. Lock gates open within the interior of the trail system.

B. Grooming on Mill Creek, Cottonwood and Shields Loop Trails require a key for Forest Service gates. The Forest Service shall check out one key to the Club in the name of the individual doing the grooming. The Mill Creek gate shall be kept closed and locked except to pass the groomer through. The Cottonwood and Shields Loop gates may be left open for the season.

C. Agree to responsibility for maintenance and repairs of the gates damaged during the course of the snowmobile season. Ensure gates are locked and include proper hazard signing.

D. Coordinate the installation of snowmobile trail signs and bulletin boards at the trailheads. The snowmobile trail sign system will be put up when the grooming season begins and removed when it ends. All signs will be installed in accordance with the Forest Service sign plan for the area. Replace signs and posts as needed and raise signs on the posts as the snow depth increases through the course of the season. Minimum clearance from the bottom of the sign to the snow surface is 42".

E. Coordinate removal and storage of the signs at the end of the season.

F. Agree the following people will serve on the Grooming Committee: ***Wayne Ford (Chairman), Tommy Queen and Clint Juhnke***

FY 2008
FINANCIAL PLAN

	FOREST SERVICE	CLUB			FWP	
Cost Elements Direct Costs	**(a) Contributions**	**(b) Contributions**	**(c) In-Kind Contributions**	**(d) FWP Reimb Club Expenses**	**(e) Contribution**	**Subtotal**
Salaries/Labor	$2,696.00	$1,500.00	$10,000.00		$633.00	$14,829.00
Travel		$1,700.00	$3,000.00	$1,733.00	$155.00	$6,588.00
Supplies		$2,500.00	$5,000.00	$1,155.00	$97.00	$8,752.00
Groomer		$3,500.00	$6,000.00	$2,887.00		$12,387.00
Subtotal:	**$2,696.00**	**$9,200.00**	**$24,000.00**	**$5,775.00**	**$885.00**	**$42,556.00**
Indirect Costs	$350.00	$800.00	$3,000.00	0	$77.00	$4227.00
Total	**$3,046.00**	**$10,000.00**	**$27,000.00**	**$5,775.00**	**$962.00**	**(f) $46,783.00**

(Rounded to the nearest whole dollar)

Matching Costs Determination

Total Forest Service Share = (a) ÷ (f) = (g)	6.5% (g)
Total Cooperator Share = (b+c+d+e) ÷ (f) = (h)	93.5% (h)
Total (g+h) = (i)	100% (i)

Instructions

(a) Forest Service Contribution: Forest Service employee salaries, travel, equipment, supplies, etc., provided toward completion of the project. Total Forest Service indirect cost (overhead) is also included in this column. All the costs listed here are an expense to the Forest Service.

(b) Club Contribution: Club salaries, travel, equipment, supplies, etc., provided toward completion of the project. Total Club indirect cost (overhead) is also included in this column. All of the costs listed here are an expense to the Club.

(c) Value of Club In-Kind Contribution: Club noncash contributions provided toward completion of the project for which the Club has incurred no expense. These contributions can be made from the Club or through the Club by other entities and include such items as volunteer labor, donated materials, equipment, supplies, etc. These values are not reimbursable and can only be used to satisfy the Club's matching requirement.

(d) FWP Reimbursable Club Expenses: The estimated figures listed here are both the maximum FWP funds to be obligated for reimbursement and Club expenses that are not included anywhere else on this form. All the costs listed here are an expense to FWP.

(e) FWP Contribution: FWP employee salaries, travel, equipment, supplies, etc., provided toward completion of the project. Total FWP indirect cost (overhead) is also included in this column. All the costs listed here are an expense to FWP.

(f) Gross Total Project Value: The sum of all the values provided toward the project. This figure reflects the true estimated cost of the project.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affected Environment – The aspects of the human environment that may change as a result of an agency action.

Alternative – A different approach to achieve the same objective or result as the proposed action.

Categorical Exclusion – A level of environmental review for agency action that do not individually, collectively, or cumulatively cause significant impacts to the human environment, as determined by rulemaking or programmatic review, and for which an EA or EIS is not required.

Cumulative Impacts – Impacts to the human environment that, individually, may be minor for a specific project, but, when considered in relation to other actions, may result in significant impacts.

Direct Impacts – Primary impacts that have a direct cause and effect relationship with a specific action, i.e. they occur at the same time and place as the action that causes the impact.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – The appropriate level of environmental review for actions that either does not significantly affect the human environment or for which the agency is uncertain whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required.

Environmental Assessment Checklist – An EA checklist is a standard form of an EA, developed by an agency for actions that generally produce minimal impacts.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – A comprehensive evaluation of the impacts to the human environment that likely would result from an agency action or reasonable alternatives to that action. An EIS also serves a public disclosure of agency decision-making. Typically, an EIS is prepared in two steps. The Draft EIS is a preliminary detailed written statement that facilitates public review and comment. The Final EIS is a completed, written statement that includes a summary of major conclusions and supporting information from the Draft EIS, responses to substantive comments received on the Draft EIS, a list of all comments on the Draft EIS and any revisions made to the Draft EIS and an explanation of the agency's reasons for its decision.

Environmental Review – An evaluation, prepared in compliance with the provisions of MEPA and the MEPA Model Rules, of the impacts to the human environment that may result as a consequence of an agency action.

Human Environment – Those attributes, including but not limited to biological, physical, social, economic, cultural, and aesthetic factors that interrelate to form the environment.

Long-Term Impact – An impact, which lasts well beyond the period of the initial project.

Mitigated Environmental Assessment – The appropriate level of environmental review for actions that normally would require an EIS, except that the state agency can impose designs, enforceable controls, or stipulations to reduce the otherwise significant impacts to below the level of significance. A mitigated EA must demonstrate that: (1) all impacts have been identified; (2) all impacts can be mitigated below the level of significance; and (3) no significant impact is likely to occur.

Mitigation – An enforceable measure(s), designed to reduce or prevent undesirable effects or impacts of the proposed action.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – The federal counterpart of MEPA that applies only to federal actions.

No Action Alternative – An alternative, required by the MEPA Model Rules for purposes of analysis, that describes the agency action that would result in the least change to the human environment.

Public Participation – The process by which an agency includes interested and affected individuals, organizations, and agencies in decision making.

Record of Decision – Concise public notice that announces the agency's decision, explains the reason for that decision, and describes any special conditions related to implementation of the decision.

Scoping – The process, including public participation, that an agency uses to define the scope of the environmental review.

Secondary Impacts – Impacts to the human environment that are indirectly related to the agency action, i.e. they are induced by a direct impact and occur at a later time or distance from the triggering action.

Short-Term Impact – An impact directly associated with a project that is of relatively short duration.

Significance – The process of determining whether the impacts of a proposed action are serious enough to warrant the preparation of an EIS. An impact may be adverse, beneficial or both. If none of the adverse impacts are significant, an EIS is not required.

Supplemental Review – A modification of a previous environmental review document (EA or EIS) based on changes in the proposed action, the discovery of new information, or the need for additional evaluation.

Tiering – Preparing an environmental review by focusing specifically on narrow scope of issues because the broader scope of issues was adequately addressed in previous environmental review document(s) that may be incorporated by reference.