

**Earthjustice • Greater Yellowstone Coalition •  
Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance • Sierra Club •  
Wyoming Wilderness Association**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release:**  
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**Conservation Groups Join Forest Service  
And Skiing Company To Propose Heliskiing Compromise  
*Negotiated Plan Submitted To Court***

**Pocatello, Idaho** – Conservation groups joined the U.S. Forest Service and a helicopter skiing company yesterday in proposing a scheduled reduction in helicopter access for downhill skiing to protect a wilderness study area in the Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee National Forests.

The compromise proposal asks the federal district court in Idaho to issue an injunction that would restore the wilderness character of the Palisades Wilderness Study Area (“WSA”) to 1984 levels, as required by the Wyoming Wilderness Act. If accepted by the court, the proposal would require helicopter skiing in the WSA to be reduced over a period of four years, reaching the 1984 level of 65 skier days in the 2010-2011 winter season. Helicopter skiing could proceed in other portions of a 169,000-acre National Forest permit area that are outside the 136,000-acre Palisades WSA.

The Idaho court ruled in November 2006 that the Forest Service’s authorization of a major expansion of helicopter skiing in the WSA violated the Wyoming Wilderness Act’s mandate to preserve the WSA’s 1984 wilderness character. However, instead of issuing an injunction to prohibit all helicopter skiing in the area, the court accepted the conservation groups’ offer to negotiate with the Forest Service and the helicopter skiing operator to arrive at a compromise that would protect the WSA while allowing time for helicopter skiing operations to transition to alternative terrain.

“We are pleased that we were able to reach this agreement that ensures steady progress toward restoring the wild character and wildlife values of the Palisades Wilderness Study Area,” said Lloyd Dorsey of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. “We look forward to working with the Forest Service and the helicopter skiing operator to assess alternative skiing sites as the transition period moves forward.”

“The Palisades is one of the most important wild areas left in Wyoming. It is located just minutes from downtown Jackson,” added Kirk Koepsel of the Sierra Club. “Protecting the Palisades ensures that it will be enjoyed in the future by not only the residents of Jackson Hole, but the millions of tourists who come every year to Teton County to experience the area’s majestic wild beauty.”

Under the compromise injunction proposal submitted to the Idaho court, helicopter skiing operations in the Palisades Wilderness Study Area would be governed by the following schedule:

Winter 2006/2007 Season: Limit of 854 Skier Days

Winter 2007/2008 Season: Limit of 598 Skier Days (70% of 2006-07)

Winter 2008/2009 Season: Limit of 512 Skier Days (60% of 2006-07)

Winter 2009/2010 Season: Limit of 342 Skier Days (40% of 2006-07)

Winter 2010/2011 Season and thereafter: Limit of 65 Skier Days.

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