
Steamboat Lake Outpost Snowmobile SUP Administrative Renewal

ACTIVITY #: PL20250005
DIRECTOR DECISION: 03/07/2025

PETITIONER: JONES OUTPOST HOLDING LLC (Ben Simms)
PETITION: Renewal of Special Use Permit PL-20-128 for
Snowmobile Tours
LEGAL: A Tract of Land in Sections 28 and 29, T 10 N, R85W
LOCATION: 60880 County Road 129
ZONE DISTRICT: 1. Staging area zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD)
2. Access trails for tours zoned Agriculture/ Forestry (A/F)
AREA: 11.93 acres
STAFF CONTACT: Greg Jaeger, gjaeger@co.routt.co.us
ATTACHMENTS: • Trail Map

History:

Steamboat Lake Outpost, formerly Hahn's Peak Roadhouse and formerly Steamboat Lake Outfitters (SLO), was purchased by the petitioners, Jones Outpost Holding, LLC in 2021. There was a long history of complaints against the operation when it was SLO, but these complaints have dropped substantially since SLO ceased operation, in 2011.

The PUD plan for the operation base was completely overhauled and approved in 2013. In 2015, the permits for snowmobile and ATV tours (under separate permits) out of Steamboat Lake Outpost were reviewed and approved by Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. The existing conditions have been refined over the years in response to neighbor complaints.

Historically, most complaints have been related to the use of Trail #1, which accesses the national forest via a private easement over Larkspur Lane. The applicant has been directing usage towards Steamboat Lake State Park via Trail #2 allowing users to access the national forest via the State Park's Queally Trail. This has reduced the usage of Trail #1 and therefore, the impacts on adjacent property owners.

Site Description:

Steamboat Lake Outpost is located on RCR 129 about a half mile southeast of Hahn's Peak Village. The property is zoned PUD and has a PUD plan that has been mostly implemented in terms of the proposed structures and uses. This is the base of operation for all of their off-site tours, which include snowmobile, ATV, horseback, and sleigh rides.

Project Description:

No changes to the existing approval are being requested. Staff has suggested some changes to the existing condition of approval. Comments on those changes are detailed in the conditions of approval.

The applicant is currently permitted by the USFS to operate in the national forest north of Steamboat Lake Outpost. This area is accessed via Trail #1 (the easement off of Larkspur Lane) which is regulated by the County or by crossing CR 129 (onto Trail #3), entering the State Park and then crossing back over CR 129 to Queally Trail, a route that is also regulated by the County and crosses a parcel owned by the State Park, and then into the national forest. The Steamboat Lake Outpost Forest Service permit also allows access to California Park. This area is accessed through the State Park. The applicant also has a permit through Steamboat Lake State Park to operate snowmobile tours on State Park land, including the Queally Trail. This land is accessed via Trail #2 and, when snow is low, via Trail #3.

Steamboat Lake Outpost runs shuttles to transport clients and, according to the applicant, a lot of their rental customers stay in the cabins on-site. The Steamboat Lake Outpost compound has two accesses onto CR 129. They have a private easement over Larkspur Lane (Trail #1), which allows them to access the national forest. They also possess an easement on the west side of CR 129, north of Parkside Dr, which allows them to access the state park.

Twenty guests are able to go out on a tour at time. The ratio of guests to guides is 10:1. Guests must be guided out to the national forest and back on Trail #1. Dates of operation on Trail #1 are December 1st to April 15th, from 8:00 am until 7:30 pm. Dates of operation on Trails #2 and #3 are December 1st to March 31st, from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm. The operator is currently allowed to run nine tours per day.

Complaints:

- Robert and Doris Newton are neighbors of the Steamboat Lake Outpost, and the easement over Larkspur Lane (Trail #1) affects their property. In the winter of '15/'16, they submitted a log of alleged violations to the requirement of guests being guided in and out on Trail #1. Staff was unable to locate correspondence with the permittee concerning this list.
- In the winter of '19/'20 Nancy Weber submitted a complaint concerning parking on Larkspur Lane near the intersection with CR 129. Both the PUD plan and the SUP prohibit parking on Larkspur Ln. The SUP is for snowmobile tours that occur off-site and does not govern any of the uses that take place at the Steamboat Lake Outpost base of operations. The PUD plan does. Staff determined that this complaint is best addressed through the PUD plan and not the SUP. Staff discussed this situation with the permittee and a plan to address this situation has been formulated. Since the complaint concerns activities that fall within the PUD, no action will be taken as part of this permit or renewal process.
- In the winter of '20/'21 Nancy Weber submitted a complaint explaining that she had called the Steamboat Lake Outpost 3 times in January telling them about unguided snowmobiles on an easement. Staff was unable to locate correspondence with the complainant nor the permittee fully addressing this matter.
- No additional complaints have been received about this snowmobile operation.

Staff Comments:

- This review is limited to complaints on record and compliance with the conditions of approval.
- Staff believes that all of the negative impacts of the operation have been mitigated to an acceptable level through the conditions of approval.

- By approving this permit in the past, Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners have deemed this type of activity, at this intensity of use, appropriate for this site, if properly mitigated.
- The review of this application is limited to impacts to private lands and impacts to private lands from the operation on federal lands.
- **Bold** language in the conditions of approval represents suggested new language, and the ~~strikeouts~~ represent language that is suggested to be removed. Staff comments follow conditions that are to be amended to explain why the amendment was made.

*****Issues for Discussion*****

Staff has not identified any issues for discussion

DIRECTOR'S OPTIONS:

1. **Renew the Special Use Permit renewal request without conditions** if it is determined that the petition will not adversely affect the public health, safety, and welfare and the proposed use is compatible with the immediately adjacent and nearby neighborhood properties and uses and the proposal is in compliance with the Routt County Unified Development Code and complies with the guidelines of the Routt County Master Plan.
2. **Deny the Special Use Permit renewal** if it is determined that the petition will adversely affect the public health, safety, and welfare and/or the proposed use is not compatible with the immediately adjacent and nearby neighborhood properties and uses and/or the proposed use is not in compliance with the Routt County Unified Development Code and/or the Routt County Master Plan, Make specific findings of fact; cite specific regulations or policies by number from the Routt County Master Plan, and the Routt County Unified Development Code.
3. **Table Special Use Permit renewal request** if additional information is required to fully evaluate the petition. Give specific direction to the petitioner and staff.
4. **Approve the Special Use Permit renewal request with conditions and/or performance standards** with conditions and/or performance standards if it is determined that certain conditions and/or performance standards are necessary to ensure public, health, safety, and welfare and/or make the use compatible with immediately adjacent and neighborhood properties and uses and/or bring the proposal into compliance with the Routt County Unified Development Code and the Routt County Master Plan.

FINDINGS OF FACT that may be appropriate if the Administrative Permit is approved:

1. The proposal has not changed to a degree to warrant a full review under the Unified Development Code (UDC); therefore the scope of the review was limited to compliance issues and complaints related to the permit.
2. The proposal with the following conditions is in compliance with Sections 3, 5, and 6 of the Routt County Zoning Regulations.
3. No verifiable compliance issues nor complaints have been received.

TERMS OF APPROVAL that may be appropriate may include the following:**General Approval Requirements:**

1. The Special Use Permit (SUP) is contingent upon compliance with the applicable provisions of the Routt County Zoning Regulations including but not limited to Sections 4, 5, and 6.

2. The SUP is limited to uses and facilities presented in the approved project plan. Any additional uses or facilities must be applied for in a new or amended application.
3. Any complaints or concerns which may arise from this operation may be cause for review of the SUP, at any time, and amendment or addition of conditions, or revocation of the permit if necessary.
4. In the event that Routt County commences an action to enforce or interpret this SUP, the substantially prevailing party shall be entitled to recover its costs in such action including, without limitation, attorney fees.
5. No junk, trash, or inoperative vehicles shall be stored on the property.
6. This approval is contingent upon any required federal, state, and local permits being obtained and complied with; the operation shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws. Copies of permits or letters of approval shall be submitted to the Routt County Planning Department prior to operations.
7. Fuel, flammable materials, or hazardous materials shall be kept in a safe area and shall be stored in accordance with state and local environmental requirements.
8. All exterior lighting shall be downcast and opaquely shielded.
9. Prior to the issuance of the permit, the permittee shall provide evidence of liability insurance in the amount of no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence. Routt County shall be named as an additional insured on the policy. Certificate of liability insurance shall include all permit numbers associated with the activity. **Permittee shall notify the Routt County Planning Department of any claims made against the policy.**
Staff comment: This is common language in current staff general conditions and is associated with the SLO's ATV permit as well.
10. Accessory structures/uses associated with this permit may be administratively approved by the Planning Director, without notice.
11. The permits/approval shall not be issued until all fees have been paid in full. Failure to pay fees may result in revocation of this permit. Permits/Approvals that require an ongoing review will be assessed an Annual Fee. Additional fees for mitigation monitoring will be charged on an hourly basis for staff time required to review and/or implement conditions of approval.
12. Transfer of this SUP may occur only after a statement has been filed with the Planning Director by the transferee guaranteeing that they will comply with the terms and conditions of the permit. If transferee is not the landowner of the permitted area, transferee shall submit written consent to the transfer by the landowner. Failure to receive approval for the transfer shall constitute sufficient cause for revocation of the permit if the subject property is transferred. Bonds, insurance certificates, or other security required in the permit shall also be filed with the Planning Director by the transferee to assure the work will be completed as specified. Any proposal to change the terms and conditions of a permit shall require a new permit.
13. The Permittee shall prevent the spread of weeds to surrounding lands and comply with the ~~Colorado Noxious Weeds Act as amended in 2013 and Routt County Noxious Weed Management Plan.~~ **most current version of the Colorado Noxious Weed Act and Routt County regulations for noxious weeds.**

Specific Conditions

14. All Permittee guides shall be clearly marked. Permittee employees on Trail #1 are required to wear jackets or vests clearly identifying them as guides or Permittee employees. Such jackets or vests shall be a bright, solid color-orange, yellow, or red. A maximum of 20 guest snowmobiles are allowed under this permit.
15. The Permittee shall be responsible for search and rescue of lost clients.
16. The tours shall not be conducted on County Roads, unless otherwise approved under this permit.
17. The machines used for this operation shall be registered with the State of Colorado.
18. All accidents involving personal injury resulting in hospitalization or death or property damage of \$3,000.00 or more shall be immediately reported to the Colorado State Patrol or the Sheriff's Office in the county where the accident occurred and a report shall be submitted to the Denver and Steamboat Lake Office of the Colorado State Parks on the approved form and the Routt County Planning Department within 48 hours of the accident, according to state law. All search and rescue operations shall be reported to the Routt County Planning Department within 48 hours of the incident.
19. Approval of this permit constitutes permission by the property owners and operators for Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Routt County Planning Department to conduct periodic site reviews to evaluate wildlife impact from the snowmobile operation.
20. Toilet facilities shall be made available to clients and employees and shall be approved by the Routt County Department of Environmental Health.
21. Any change to the proposed trail system or plan of operation shall be submitted to Planning Staff for evaluation. If staff determines that said changes would not create impacts to the environment, adjacent property owners, wildlife, etc., administrative adjustments to the permit may be made. Should the changes create impacts that cannot be mitigated or require numerous or involved mitigation measures, the Routt County Planning Commission and/or the Board of County Commissioners will review and approve or deny the changes.
22. Neither the issuance of this permit nor any action taken pursuant to this permit shall create a liability on the part of, or be the basis for, a cause of action against Routt County or any officer, employee, or technical advisor thereof. The issuance of this permit does not imply that the land uses permitted will be free from danger as a result of natural hazards, human error, or mechanical problems.
23. Permittee shall be responsible for maintaining trails in a safe and acceptable condition, including erosion control and prompt revegetation of any affected areas.
24. This approval supersedes all previous approvals for snowmobiles, staging areas, and trail permits.
25. TERM OF PERMIT AND RENEAL
 - a. This permit is valid until July 1, **2025 2030**. A review by Planning staff shall be conducted prior to renewal, and if no concerns are identified or if concerns/complaints can be mitigated, the permit may be administratively renewed every **two five** years. The applicant must apply in writing for this renewal prior to the expiration of the permit or it will be required to return to Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners for review.

Staff comment: The current permit term is five years, two years was an error left in on the prior approval. It is staff's opinion that based on the

lack of complaints about the operation, five years is an appropriate term for this renewal.

26. USES

- a. This permit is for guided snowmobile operations for Permittee guests on Trail #1, #2, the section of Trail #3 north of Parkside Drive, Steamboat Lake State Park, and the areas of the national forest identified on the attached map. Guests and business invitees using Trail #1 must be guided both in and out, which include privately owned snowmobiles.
- b. Tours and rentals conducted by Permittee shall not use Trail #3 south of Parkside Drive. All tours and rentals shall use Trail #2 and the section of Trail #3 north of Parkside Drive. The commercial use of Trail #3 south of Parkside Drive is allowed for temporary special circumstances only, with administrative approval, without public notice.
- c. Machines must stay on the trail at all times when surrounded by private property and travel at a speed not to exceed 15 miles per hour when traveling through the private easement.
- d. The number of machines per trip departing at one time shall not exceed 22, provided that a ratio of 10 (or fewer) riders per guide is maintained.
- e. Permittee is permitted to rent no more than 20 snowmobiles to guests of Permittee.
- f. For areas of the National Forest, only routes authorized by the US Forest Service are able to be utilized during operations.

27. OPERATING DATES AND TIMES

- a. Tours may be conducted seven (7) days per week.
- b. Guided snowmobile operations on Trail #1 shall be allowed between December 1st and April 15th unless sufficient snow exists to begin operations prior to December 1st. Operations of Trails #2 and #3 shall be allowed between December 1st and March 31st. Under no circumstances shall any machine operate on Trail #1 after April 15th, subject to change with CPW recommendation. The permittee must inform the Planning Director and the adjacent landowners prior to weather-based changes to the schedule of operation.
- c. All guided snowmobile operations for Permittee lodging guests on Trail #1 shall be conducted between 8:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. All guided snowmobile operations for Permittee lodging guests on Trail #2 shall be conducted between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Late arrivals through Trail #1 after 7:30 p.m. due to emergencies or unforeseen circumstances are not considered violations of this condition. Any such emergencies shall be reported to the Routt County Planning Department. Unforeseen circumstances shall be defined as the retrieval of disabled machines which may delay the return of Permittee personnel and/or lodging guests engaged in retrieval efforts.
- d. All guided snowmobile tours shall consist of groups of no more than 10 guest machines per guide and shall leave Permittee on tours at 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, and 4:30 for a total of no more than nine departures per day. Permittee personnel shall be permitted to depart from site as needed between normal operating times of 8:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of trail maintenance, retrieval of disabled machines, or aiding departed

tours that require assistance such as transporting guests back to the site due to disabled machines.

28. ENFORCEMENT AND MONITORING

- a. A Permittee staff member shall patrol the parking lot/Larkspur Lane area during the hours of operation for the purpose of controlling the number of uninvited guests (trespassers) on Trail #1.
- b. Permittee shall monitor and record the usage of Trail #1 and submit a report of the total number of users to Planning Staff at the end of the season.
- c. Permittee is required to place and maintain signage every 200 yards along Trail #1 (the private easement) stating that it is a private trail, not for public use; riders must stay on the trail; and that the speed limit is 15 mph. Signage shall be placed facing both directions at the north and south end of Trail #1. Additional signage shall be placed at the north end of Trail #1 that directs the public to use the Quealy Trail to access gas and supplies at Permittee. All signage shall remain in place throughout the year.

29. SIGNAGE

- a. Permittee is required to place and maintain signage every 200 yards along Trail #1 (the private easement) stating that it is a private trail, not for public use; riders must stay on the trail; and that the speed limit is 15 mph. Signage shall be placed facing both directions at the north and south end of Trail #1. Additional signage shall be placed at the north end of Trail #1 that directs the public to use the Quealy Trail to access gas and supplies at Permittee. All signage shall remain in place throughout the operating season.
- b. The permittee shall install one sign on CR 129 on the north side of the Quealy Trail crossing and one sign on CR 129 to the south of the Park Side Subdivision easement (Trail #3) crossing facing the direction of roadway travel, or as determined by the Public Works Department.
- c. All signs used for this operation shall comply with the Sign Code outlined in Section 5.9 of the Routt County Zoning Regulations. No off-premises signs or billboards are permitted.
- d. Permittee shall install snowmobile crossing signage in accordance with the MUTCD at the crossing on CR 62. This shall be at the permittees expense. Permittee shall order signs and pay for signs from the Road and Bridge Department prior to installation.

30. LODGING GUESTS/RIDER RESPONSIBILITY

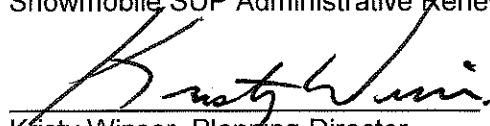
- a. The permittee shall provide the user with a safety lesson, a riding helmet, and a trail map illustrating trails and private property to address and avert trespass issues.
- b. Permittee shall educate clients on multi-use trails in the area, speed limits, noise disturbance to local residents, and respect for non-motorized use areas.
- c. If riders encounter wildlife on the trail, they will stop their machines until the wildlife moves on and riders will not leave their machines to pursue wildlife on foot.
- d. Prior to beginning their tour, all unguided tour clients shall be required to sign a form stating that they have been informed of the conditions of this permit and

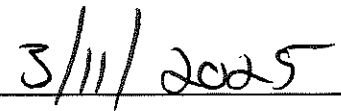
that they agree to abide by them. This form shall be reviewed and approved by planning staff.

31. ACCESS/ROADS/PARKING/TRAFFIC

- a. Routt County has the authority to close any county road at its sole discretion if damage to the road may occur by its use. To the extent that a road closure may affect Permittee's operation, Routt County will cooperate with Permittee to allow operations to be continued in a safe and practicable stopping point.
- b. Routt County roads shall not be completely blocked at any time. If traffic regulation is deemed necessary, it shall be conducted in conformance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control at the Permittee's expense and the Permittee shall notify the Routt County Public Works Director, or designee thereof, in advance to review and approve the proposed traffic control plan:
 1. The Permittee shall provide traffic control signage along routes and at intersections as specified by the Routt County Public Works Director and at Permittee's expense; and types and placement of signs shall be in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- c. Routt County roads affected by this SUP will be inspected by the Routt County Public Works Department at intervals determined by the same. Any road damage repair or maintenance needs above and beyond typical maintenance, attributable to this use, shall be made by the county or a third-party contractor as selected by the Routt County Public Works Department and on a schedule determined by the same. Permittee shall solely bear the costs of repairs.
- d. Routt County Public Works Plowing Operations will commence as usual. It will be the Permittee's responsibility to maintain their trails if snow from plowing operations impacts trails. This includes but no limited to trails in the county right-of-way as well as trail and roadway crossings.
- e. Permittee's onsite snow plowing operations shall be confined to permittee's property. No snow shall be stored off-site and snow shall not be plowed across the county right-of-way. Plowing across the right-of-way is punishable by law.

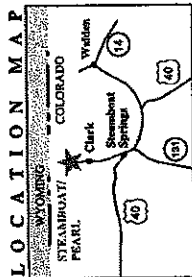
I hereby approve/disapprove (circle appropriate) this Steamboat Lake Outfitters Snowmobile SUP Administrative Renewal.


Kristy Winsor, Planning Director


Date



STEAMBOAT LAKE AND PEARL LAKE STATE PARKS



Elevation 8,037 feet.

CAMPER SERVICES

- Restrooms
- Laundry
- Showers (Coin Operated)

LEGEND

- Visitor Center
- Amphitheater
- Boat Ramp
- Campsite Cabins
- Dam
- Dump Station
- Parking
- Wilderness Boring Zone
- Yurts
- Dirt Road
- Park Boundary

Visit the Steamboat Lake Marina for

- Pontoon Boat Rentals
- Kayak, Canoe, Paddleboat, Fishing Boat Rentals
- Campsite Cabins Year 'round
- Slip Rentals
- Fishing & Camping Supplies
- Groceries
- Deli
- Fresh Fudge!

970-879-7019

HAIN'S PEAR ROADHOUSE

Pearl Lake Campground

PEARL LAKE

Pearl Lake Connection Trail

2 miles

To Clark and Steamboat Springs

To Clark

Route National Forest Access
To Sand Mountain

Dutch Hill Campground

Sunrise Vista Campground

Willow Creek Trail

To Wyoming (unpaved - closed winter)
Route National Forest Access

Hain's Peak Village

County Road 125 (Rt. River Road)

County Rd. 62

Placer Cove

Willow Creek Trail

Nature Trail

Marina

Rainbow Ridge

Camper Services

Very Bar Trail

Willow Creek Trail

Sage Flats

Steamboat Lake

Willow Creek Trail

Placer Cove

Nature Trail

Marina

Rainbow Ridge

Camper Services

Very Bar Trail

Willow Creek Trail

Sage Flats

Steamboat Lake

Trail #1



