

May 22, 2020

Connie Cummins

Forest Supervisor, Superior National Forest

c/o Michael Jimenez, Project Leader *via email comments-eastern-superior@usda.gov*

8901 Grand Avenue Place

Duluth, MN 55808

Re: Comments on the Lutsen Mountains Ski Area Expansion Project

Please accept this letter serving as support to the proposed Lutsen Mountains Ski Area Expansion Project.

My wife Jana and I moved to Lutsen 31 years ago leaving established careers and familiar territory for an uncertain future. What was the draw? Many, including our parents and friends, felt this was not a wise move. The decision was an obvious one for us. We were excited to move to an area that borders the BWCAW, an area that would provide year-round outdoor activities, an area that featured a destination ski area, and of course so much more.

Fast forward 31 years and three children later, and I can tell you that Lutsen Mountains has had monumental influence on our family. Here are some examples:

- Our son currently lives in Crested Butte, Colorado - a ski town. He completed his college education in Digital Arts and Film and now works in the ski film industry (currently working for Matchstick Productions). If it were not "but for" Lutsen Mountains, it's highly unlikely he would be working in the ski film industry.....and that is his passion. He's happy.
- Our daughter lives in Park City Utah.....another ski town. After completing her college education, she started her own business named "Roots of Wellness". The focus of her business is health and wellness and her principal studio is the outdoors including back country skiing. Again, the likelihood of starting a career with an outdoor focus would have been unlikely if not "but for" Lutsen Mountains.
- Another daughter lives in Duluth, Minnesota. After graduating from Cook County High School, following a successful high school alpine ski team career, she went to on to ski at UMD at the NCAA Division II level. Having sport in her life provided balance and discipline complimenting her academics. Again, that would not have happened if not "but for" Lutsen Mountains.
- In 1992, Jana and I built the Mountain Inn, a 30 room Inn located at the base of the ski area. The development of the Inn was encouraged by the former owner of Lutsen Mountains, Charlie Skinner, Sr., and the original developer and owner of the Ski area, George Nelson, Jr. Both became my encouragers and mentors. As my wife will say to this day....the Inn and the


mountain provided us the opportunity to carve out a living in Lutsen, to raise our family here while enabling her to establish a now 30 year career as an educator at ISD 166 Cook County Public School.

The Mountain Inn was sold in 2018 to a younger couple. It's been fun for Jana I to watch as they begin to breathe a different kind of life into the Inn – with refreshed energy and enthusiasm that is contagious.

We are hopeful the new owners will be blessed like we were for the next 30 years and that they too will find reward running their Inn while entertaining guests from all over the world. Clearly, their success will be largely dependent upon the health and wellness of Lutsen Mountains as it was true for Jana and me. As Lutsen Mountains continued to reinvest in their operations over the last three decades we owned the Inn, we found the Inn benefiting from this activity while encouraging us to make new investments in our property and other pursuits as well.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering this proposal. The expansion will change lives beyond the fundamentals of economics, as my family was so fortunate to experience.

Cordially,


Mike and Jana Larson
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