



(505) 299-5404
3620 Wyoming Blvd NE Ste 222
Albuquerque, NM 87111
nmwildlife@nmwildlife.org

May 3, 2022

James Duran, Forest Supervisor
% Paul Schilke, Winter Sports Coordinator
P.O. Box 110
Questa, NM 87556

Re: Taos Ski Valley Gondola and Other Improvements Project

Dear Supervisor Duran,

The New Mexico Wildlife Federation recommends that the USFS require a full environmental impact statement to assess the Taos Ski Valley's pending proposal. The construction of significant new facilities and the expansion into new terrain will affect wildlife, water and other critical factors that must receive full study.

The NMWF is the oldest conservation organization in New Mexico representing the statewide interests of hunters, anglers and wildlife. Founded in 1914 by pioneering conservationist Aldo Leopold, the NMWF focuses on conserving public lands, wildlife and other public resources.

The NMWF believes that the full EIS must address the following issues to assess the environmental consequences of Taos Ski Valley's pending proposal:

_ A full analysis of water usage and sewage treatment proposals with special attention to potential reductions of the flow and the water quality on the Rio Hondo;

_ Potential project impacts to water temperature and the timing of runoff on the Rio Hondo and other waters from planned tree removal and other activities;

_ Potential impacts to trout, beaver, birds, benthic invertebrates and other species in and along the Rio Hondo;

_ Potential impacts to bighorn sheep and their habitat in the nearby Wheeler Peak and Columbine/Hondo Wilderness areas in addition to other USFS lands in the area;

_ Potential impacts to wildlife, including existing wildlife migration patterns and corridors, from gondola operations and other planned disturbances in the area;

_ The entire EIS must address not only how the facets of the project would affect existing forest conditions, but also how the stated water demands and other impacts will affect expected future conditions given the reality of climate change.

Thank you for your work in reviewing this project. The NMWF looks forward to reviewing and commenting on the DEIS on this project.

Best Regards,

Ben Neary
Conservation Director,
NMWF

505-999-7592