

Dear Carson National Forest,

My name is Jacob Becker and I work in Angel Fire on ski and bike patrol as well as Fire and EMS. I moved here two years ago due to the outdoor recreation and I've stayed for the outdoor recreation and amazing community focused around it. I come from a conservation work background and am deeply passionate about accessible outdoor opportunities done in a sustainable fashion. I have reviewed the Taos ski valley's master plan, in addition to the Environmental assessment and am in favor of a large majority of the projects, however I have great concern regarding the public access impacts the base to base gondola may present.

“As the potential for fees to be associated with the proposed recreation opportunities exists, those with the ability to participate in the proposed activities would experience a benefit in the form of expanded offerings on CNF lands, while others choosing to participate in recreation on CNF lands beyond the TSV SUP area are expected to have experiences and opportunities similar to existing conditions.” pg. 20

The lift 4 hiking trail and nordic ski/ snowshoe trails will increase usage to TSV's backside and will provide greater recreation opportunities. The goal is to develop the backside and expand activities year round which I believe is a good thing, however it is a separate experience from accessing the wilderness. My fear is the gondola is attempting to provide access to both the TSV activities and WPW and the ability to access the WPW without going through TSV will be diminished. “Lands beyond the TSV SUP area are expected to have experiences and opportunities similar to existing conditions” This is very vague and leaves this portion of the plan open to interpretation. The word “expected” implies there isn't a concrete plan, and what is similar to existing conditions?

Access to WPW should be free of charge and a separate entity from TSV. If my plans for the day involve hiking to Williams lake, there should be zero to minimal interaction with TSV facilities and no payment to TSV required. If I intend to ride the bike trails TSV has developed I am okay paying for TSV facilities. Likewise if I wish to ski Lake fork peak, there should be no fees owed to TSV and zero to minimal interaction with their facilities. This is a wilderness experience. If I wish to enjoy the nordic ski trails TSV has constructed, then it's acceptable to pay a fee for these facilities. The access to WPW and TSV backside are two different entities and TSV should not have the ability to make a profit on those wishing to enjoy our public lands.

I am all about increasing outdoor recreation opportunities and furthering these possibilities on the backside of TSV, however access to our public lands must remain open to the public and not privatized. I am worried the base to base gondola is going to disrupt free access to WPW and CNF recreation opportunities and don't believe the current EA has sufficient thought given to this issue.

Regarding skier circulation and summer access issues, I believe utilizing the current infrastructure will suffice by incorporating a bus shuttle system from the frontside to backside. That way if you're wishing to utilize TSV backside facilities and are a paying customer there will

be a shuttle system in place, and if you wish to explore the WPW or CNF you are still able to drive to existing parking at Williams lake trailhead. There is no need to place environmental stress, and scenery impacts when the existing facilities can be enhanced and utilized to accomplish the same task, while avoiding the interruption of free public access to one of our premier public lands in the state.

For these reasons I oppose the base to base gondola project. I want to see recreation opportunities grow, however I believe access to WPW and CNF should not be impacted by TSV's goal to increase utilization of the backside facilities. I believe a bus shuttle system should be in place for paying customers, however free and uninterrupted access to our public lands should be left in place for users not wishing to use the facilities of TSV. This minimizes environmental impacts, disruption of scenery, uses existing facilities while still achieving the goal of increasing skier circulation and overuse issues of backside travel.

-Jacob Becker