

May 22, 2023

James Duran, Forest Service Supervisor

Sent via CNF's public Comment portal at:

<https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public//CommentInput?Project=61390>

Re: Taos Ski Valley Gondola and Other Improvements Project

Dear Supervisor Duran:

Soy Priscilla Sillas Rael, muy orgullosa bisnieta de Marcos Martin Montoya y Genoveva Duran Gonzales Montoya. Son cinco generaciones que estamos en Valdez en la Merced de Arroyo Hondo Grant. Mis cadenas de títulos estan bajo el tratado de Guadalupe Hidalgo. La Merced donde esta mi pais es igual con la Floresta – es Federal.

Yo riego mis arboles, mi jardin, mis flores, mis remedios con la agua de la Acequia de San con la Acequia. Nos pasaron sus costumbres, sus modos de vivir.

nuestras yardas son cosas que nos duelen, quenos arde...pero tambien que nos da mucho orgullo de cuidar. Yo nomas tengo siete o sera una dozena de arboles...tengo manzana, cirhuela, albercoque, piñon, chamiso. Toda mi familia vienen a nuestra casa a recibir fruta, remedios. Vienen a nuestra casa que es mi Querencia. Ustedes que no saben que quiere decir la palabra "Querencia" – it is Sanctuary. My yard is my sanctuary, my Acequia is my sanctuary, my

I am a small orchard farmer. I have a garden plot. I grow flowers that attract butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. I inherited our family plot in Valdez – en la Merced de Arroyo Hondo Grant, heredera. I want to remind folks that we are important. What happens at the Taos Ski to me than the millions that the Taos Ski Valley has – to me, my son, my fiancé, may family.

I ask the Forest Service to consider carefully what the impacts are. How can you know the impacts if you do not know my soil, my yards, my Merced?

Somos importantes. Por favor. **POR FAVOR!** Oiganos. Listen to what we are trying to educate you about. We are experts on the ground. I have served on the Commission of the Acequia de San Antonio as a Commissioner in two separate terms for over fifteen years – proudly – for my mother's legacy. My mother was Nora Montoya Herrera Sillas. Those are big names in this area but they are bigger names in my heart.

As you ask us to fill out a substantive comment, why not try to remember all of our names? And, learn our language and learn the ways of our traditions – nuestra cultura. It means something. Those things mean something and they are being impacted by everything that you are allowing at the Taos Ski Valley. The Forest Service should not be driven by what the Taos Ski Valley would like to design. We should be looking at the design that is already in place – God's Country! The sovereign Merced de nuestra raza. Help us to nurture, not destroy, the place that we call home, the river that provides life for us – el Rio Hondo que nos da vida.

I leave you with one last thing: The infrastructure at the Taos Ski Valley is not at its optimum....what's going to happen if there is a fire?! Who is going to be impacted? ALL OF US ARE!

And, remember: how many tributaries does the Taos Valley have that drain into the Rio Grande? Do not tell me that only the people on the Rio Hondo are impacted. We all know the difference. The impacts are immeasurable.

Save the Rio Hondo! Save our Querencia!!

Sinceramente,

Priscila C. Sillas Rael
Parciante, Heredera