



Narvette Laney

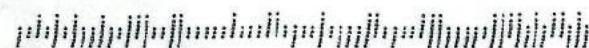
(b) (5)

Questa District Ranger Station
James Dvran c/o Paul Schilke
PO Box 110
Questa, NM 87556



Re = Ski Valley E.A.

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RECEIVED
QUESTA RANGER DISTRICT

District Ranger	Range Staff
Assist. PMO	Rec. Staff
Wildlife Staff	BMA File
Resource Assit.	Customer Svs. Rep

May 20, 2023 ①

Re = Ski Valley Development and Expansion EA

Dear Mr Duran, Mr LaDell and Carson National Forest staff,

I am writing regarding the Taos Ski Valley's proposal to dramatically expand development and increase negative impacts on the Rio Hondo watershed and surrounding communities.

An EIS should be conducted

Given the number and complexity of the projects proposed - and their clear negative impact on the watershed and community, particularly given the context of the impending climate catastrophe, water uncertainties, and severe weather events - it is grossly irresponsible to be using the EA process when the and the complexity of the proposals should mandate that a full EIS be conducted, including the No Action Alternative, as required.

Cumulative Impacts Should Be Considered

You should be considering the cumulative impacts of ongoing development in the Ski Valley automatically. We should not have to bring this obvious fact to your attention. Every few years there are a bunch of new proposals that Billionaire Bacon brings forward in his plan to turn Taos Ski Valley into Aspen. There is already too much development in the fragile Rio Hondo Upper watershed. We are already past the tipping point. Billionaires should not be calling the shots. Community matters.

Culture matters. Environment matters. Farms matter. Water matters. Climate change matters. Cumulative impact matters.

(2)

Ignoring Impacts to Culture and Community -

Colonialism Continues

Northern New Mexico is special. One of the things that makes it so unique is the history of the Land Grants, and the sustainable agriculture practices and democratically managed acequias that sprung out of the Land Grants and their cultures.

Given the history of the US Forest Service claiming Land Grant lands as their own, rather than stuffing the continued devastation of the Upper Rio Hondo watershed down our community's throat, a more collaborative and inclusive process is called for.

You - as representatives of the federal government - are replicating your colonial past once again - by prioritizing the interests of a billionaire, profit and capitalism over the future of our communities, our acequias, our sustainable farms and ranches, and the ~~R~~ health of the Rio Hondo watershed. We depend on our waters for our survival.

Compromising Water Quantity and Quality

③

Water truly is life. We have all heard the stories of increasing algal populations in the acequias that are sourced from the Rio Hondo - with the Ski Valley the almost certain source of the pollutants that are fueling ~~that~~ those algal blooms. The acequias fed by the Rio Hondo are used to grow food and support small farms and ranches. The downstream communities depend on the acequias and private wells for their water. This water is being put at increasing risk due to Ski Valley water drawdowns. You are not even factoring in climate change and a rapidly destabilizing climate.

The Proposed 5 Million Gallon Water Tank Is A Potential Catastrophe

Don't you think that community members should be able to consider and respond to the threat regarding the proposed 5 million gallon water tank in an open forum rather than making input extremely difficult and cumbersome? Has such a tank been engineered before in a setting such as the extremely steep alpine environment where you are proposing to locate it?

* What if the tank fails and 5 million gallons of water are released rapidly? What are the risks to the Rio Hondo riparian area, to residences and farms, to the acequias? How many lives are at risk? Who will be held responsible for repair and rebuilding, for the loss of lives, in the event of a massive failure of the tank? Has the viewshed been considered and the visual blight that will be created? (4)

Water Rights

Why does the Ski Valley seem to have priority water rights over multi-generational families who have farmed here for hundreds of years? Why does Billionaire Bacon seem to be excluded from the Abeyta Settlement that has changed water usage for so many in Taos County? Can this be litigated so that downstream communities can be protected from losing even more water? I hope and pray that the answer is "yes!"

The Proposed 7,000 Square Foot Restaurant

This has got to be listed under the definition of "insanity." To build a restaurant - for affluent skiers,

in the interests of Billionaire Bacon - that will (5)
cause environmental harm in an alpine ~~environ~~ zone
that is already over-developed, that will draw down
the Rio Hondo aquifer even further, that will
pollute the watershed even more - should never
have been considered.

I am a soil scientist by training - building a
septic system on steep & erosive slopes, with
shallow soils, is a set-up for failure and downstream
impacts as a result of raw sewage releases.

Growth Inducing Impacts on Taos County As A Whole

Taos County and the Town of Taos are under extreme
housing pressures. With all of the affluent people
who moved here during the pandemic many
people are being pushed out due to the lack of
affordable housing. ~~We~~ Continued Ski Valley
development will only increase our challenges.

Shame on You!

Shame on you for not caring about the people who
live here. Shame on you for selling out to Billionaire
Bacon's interests - Shame on you for not caring about
our farms and ranches - Shame on you for not
caring for our forests and water. Shame on you.

With immense Disappointment, Nan Laney, (b) (5)