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Title:

Comments: I am a year round resident of Arroyo Hondo, NM. I object to the following proposed developments planned for Taos Ski Valley ski area (TSV). Issues that I feel need to be resolved in order for these proposals to move forward are related to the following:

The new lift 7 restaurant

The moving and rebuilding of the Whistlestop cafe

The base to base gondola

The lift 7 restaurant is a proposed 7000 square foot building and would be 3.5 times the size of the current Whistlestop cafe. The TSV ethos statement says "better not bigger" - they are violating their own supposed values. This large building would be located at an 11000' foot elevation and be adjacent to a wilderness area. It will detract from the natural beauty of the area and be a blight upon the visual scenery. There is no need for another restaurant on the mountain. I spend 40+ days on the mountain per season, and I never once waited in line to use a restroom, nor was I distressed about not being able to find food. The one exception to not waiting in line for a restroom was when the water crisis shut down the restrooms at the phoenix grill last season. The fact that TSV has proposed 3 possible options for providing potable water - drilling, trenching in pipelines, or hauling - clearly indicates that TSV does not have a viable plan for providing water to their 7000 square foot restaurant. TSV needs to submit a singular viable solution, and stick to it, before the lift 7 restaurant can be approved. To allow TSV to build without a viable plan in place for providing water/waste treatment is irresponsible. The US national forest needs to protect public lands and resources. Building large structures with plumbing/heating/toilets at 11000' in elevation at this latitude is environmentally and aesthetically irresponsible.

Relocation and rebuilding of the Whistlestop

Again, in apparent violation of their own ethos, TSV is planning on doubling the size of the Whistlestop cafe.

They have not stated exactly where this building is going to be placed. Why not?

There is another vague declaration that maybe the existing septic will work, maybe it won't. Maybe the existing well will be sufficient, maybe it won't. These restaurant proposals cannot be approved without a clear and definite plan for providing water and sewage treatment. And a clear and definite site for the structure needs to be outlined. The availability of water has been an ongoing problem at TSV. Clear, viable solutions for providing necessary water and handling waste need to be put forth before these developments can move forward. Again, Carson NF needs to do their job and protect public natural resources.

The base to base gondola

TSV claims that skier experience is impacted by congestion at lift 1. The only time that this is the case is when a significant snowfall occurs that requires avalanche mitigation. Rubezahl is at the bottom of a series of avalanche paths. A base to base gondola will not solve this problem because that gondola will not be able to operate until the requisite avalanche control work is completed for the day. Same thing at lift 4. Lift 4 cannot be opened until the avalanche work is complete. Guests need to understand that TSV is a steep and challenging mountain that requires extensive avalanche control work. On those days, guests will have to wait, whether there is a new gondola or not. TSV states that the road to lift 4 is often congested. That is simply not true. The tree clearing, the possible disturbance and/or contamination of the the lake fork river, and the unsightly blight of a 7800' long gondola are more than enough reasons to deny TSV the right to build another lift. The approval of the kachina lift to the top of Kachina peak is a good example environmental irresponsibility. That mistake should not be repeated with a base to base gondola.

What the TSV corp is trying to do is to attract an ever more wealthy clientele with promises of luxury, convenience, and improved amenities. TSV is alleging that there are problems that need to be corrected, when no such problems exist. In fact, these proposed developments will only create more problems for TSV, and more problems especially for the people downstream that live year round in the Rio Hondo valley. People that depend on clean water for agriculture and healthy aquifers for drinking water. TSV corp barely has enough water to operate currently, yet they continue to build hotels, and want to build more and larger restaurants. The character and quality of life for the people that live in the Rio Hondo valley will suffer as a direct result of TSV's greed and relentless desire to expand. The US National Forest has a duty to protect public resources. These proposed developments, if allowed to go forth, will result in diminished water quality for the Rio Hondo and Lake Fork rivers, diminished water quality for agriculture in the Hondo valley, and an ever diminishing aquifer for residents that live in Valdez and Arroyo Hondo. I urge the Carson National Forest to halt these developments that are environmentally irresponsible, misguided, and insensitive to downstream populations.