



May 28, 2020

Connie Cummins, Forest Supervisor
Superior National Forest
c/o Michael Jimenez, Project Leader 8901
Grand Avenue Place
Duluth, MN 55808

Subject: Comments on the Lutsen Mountains Ski Area Expansion Project

Dear Sir and Madam,

We are writing today in support of the proposed Lutsen Mountains Ski Area Expansion project.

As owners of a resort and recreation business on the Gunflint Trail in Cook County, we believe this expansion will increase tourism in our county, which not only provides local jobs, but also brings with it much needed revenue. Winter has always been a challenging time for businesses in our County, and Lutsen Mountains is one of the primary attractions that brings visitors to Cook County in the winter. We think this project will be an important improvement to our community and the economy. So much of Cook County land use is dominated by the Superior National Forest that this will provide an opportunity for the Forest to help support our community and its economic health. We can't think of a better use of a very small piece of our public lands in the Superior National Forest.

As residents of Cook County, our son has grown up skiing at Lutsen Mountains and it draws him back here from school at University of Minnesota Duluth most winter weekends to enjoy the best skiing the Midwest has to offer. Throughout his lifetime, however, he has had the opportunity to ski elsewhere in the American West, and misses some of the amenities those bigger ski resorts are able to offer that he can't find closer to home. Providing additional terrain, with more diversity, as well as more amenities, would bring in more tourists that are now traveling west for ski their vacations, keep Midwesterners closer to home, and introduce more Minnesotans to alpine and Nordic skiing and the beauty of the Superior National Forest.

An important component of the mandate of the Superior National Forest Land Management Plan (LMP) is to support increasing and diversifying recreational opportunities in the Forest, especially those available outside the fragile protected Wilderness area. Outdoor recreation, and alpine skiing in particular, is a "clean



industry” with very limited negative effects on clean air, clean water and other natural resources. This project aligns well with the recreation goals outlined in the Superior National Forest Land Management Plan and helps the Forest Service deliver on its mission. Approving this project helps the Forest Service implement the LMP and provides the American public with more uses of their public lands.

There is a shortage of beginner and expert terrain at the existing ski area and constructing traditional ski trails and glade skiing as part of this project can address that deficit. In addition, the proposed improvements in guest services, base area improvements, additional parking will address longstanding needs at Lutsen Mountains and make skiing there both safer and more enjoyable. This project as outlined in the Master Development Plan (MDP), is well-situated to transform the downhill skiing experience at Lutsen Mountains in a way that is environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial to our community and to the National Forest.

In addition, expanding Lutsen Mountains on a small portion of the National Forest offers significant socioeconomic benefits to our area. Recreation and tourism is by far the most important industry in our county and contributes the majority of the jobs and income that supports our schools, hospital, and tax base. Winter outdoor recreation opportunities help compliment the summer recreation that is so prevalent in northern Minnesota. Creating increased winter visitation helps provide year-round employment, tax revenue, and business to our economy.

Lutsen Mountains has been a responsible land manager within the Superior National Forest, and a community leader within Cook County. We look forward to seeing continued benefits of responsible development to benefit the lives and livelihoods of those of us who are blessed to call the Superior National Forest home and to introduce visitors to the unique beauty of this place.

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