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First name: Sam

Last name: Rosenkrantz

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I would like to voice my objections to the proposed expansion on Golden Peak at Vail in Colorado. I object because of the exclusivity of the proposed use, the environmental impact of the expansion, and the existence of alternatives for training that do not require further use of public lands.

The use of public lands for a private resort is contentious enough, but expanding the race facilities would limit use to an even smaller portion of people. If Vail had asked to expand their terrain for all skiers and snowboarders I would support the project, but I object to the use of terrain for ski racers only. While other slopes are open to uphill access and useable by people who buy a lift ticket, race slopes are closed to all but those who have the resources to join SSCV or compete with their racers. Skiers and snowboarders who already access this terrain through the backcountry gate will lose their ability to use the land. The existence of a private slope for racers and training does not support the mission of the Forest Service.

The environmental pressures created by the ski race program are significantly higher than those for the rest of the resort. Snow making operations take energy and water and often start earlier for the race facilities on Golden Peak than seems reasonable because of the pressure applied by SSCV. Articles in the Vail Daily have also mentioned issues with soil saturation and animal habitat destruction that warrant further attention.

Families of ski racers already have options to use their own money and resources to attend training camps during early and late season. There is no reason to bring facilities to them at the cost to the public when they have those options. Ski racing, as opposed to skiing in general, is even more of a niche sport and should not be allowed to jeopardize public lands to expand.