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Comments: I object to the proposed "Golden Peak Improvement Project" on the basis that the wants of a few are being put ahead of the needs of the environment, wildlife, and the general public.

Sometimes public lands need to give way to new projects and the environmental toll must be weighed against the benefit to the general public. This is a clear case where there is detriment to the non-skiing general public, very little benefit to the general skiing public; all for the wants of a small group of people. The public is forever losing 42 acres of highly visible and beautiful aspen trees. The general skiing public's only benefit in the loss of these trees is a few additional runs open on certain days of the year; but there is already plenty of terrain to ski when faced with closures. Everyone is accustomed to occasional closures of public areas for special events anyway: Breckenridge mountain bike races, Mount Evans Hill climb road bicycle race, the Pikes Peak Hill Climb just to name a few. Should additional public lands be torn up so these events are not an inconvenience? The only true benefit is to the exclusive group of ski racers and ski club members who want short lift lines, want to avoid the inconvenience of having to take an additional lift and/or ski near everyone else, and want cheaper extracurricular activities for their children. This exclusive group has no intentions of sharing this space with the general skiing public even though they will be likely be the ones paying for it.

Are we willing to face the environmental consequences of the destruction of public forests for a list of wants proposed by an exclusive group? 42 acres of aspen trees will be forever lost at a time when pine forests are already being devastated by pine beetle infestations. 42 acres of forest animal habitat will be lost; and additional acreage will be lost to these animals in winter due to noise within this new area. This land will be torn up to FIS racing specifications instead of putting environmental regulations and good practices first. This is evidenced by the denial of the 2009 Golden Peak proposal. Any possible soil erosion, sediment runoff, water runoff, and increased avalanche risk is too much when a project is not in the general public's best interest.

I am a skier and I enjoy skiing at Vail.

I am glad that they are trying to move to a more environmentally friendly future. But this is a step in the wrong direction.