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Comments: I would like to express my unqualified support for the Golden Peak expansion project, as it strongly supports the interests of the Vail community and the general public.

Golden Peak has been the training arena for SSCV athletes for over 50 years. Over this period the number of SSCV athletes has grown enormously. In just the last 20 years the club has expanded from around 150 kids to over 650. This growth has strained the limits of the venue's training capacity. For instance, it is not uncommon for there to be 4 training courses set across the width of the trail. This crowded environment is not ideal for training (as it is distracting), and it is not always safe. Aggravating this issue is the Burton Open, which requires nearly half the venue to be closed for about 2 months each winter.

Due to the capacity constraints of Golden Peak, SSCV athletes need to train elsewhere at Vail and Beaver Creek at various times throughout the season. In fact, SSCV's freestyle athletes train nearly the entire season on Cookshack. Frankly, providing these alternative training sites is a very generous and appreciated gesture by Vail Resorts. But it comes at a cost: public safety. The interactions between SSCV athletes and the general public creates anxiety and at times accidents, which could be completely avoided if all SSCV training were segregated from the public.

Expanding the Golden Peak training venue not only improves safety -- for athletes and the general public -- but it will decrease the congestion at the bottom of Chair 6. The new venue will be accessed by a T-bar, enabling kids training there to remain there, and not need to return to the base of Chair 6 after each training run.

The expansion of the Golden Peak training venue will also enable early season training (late October and November) to start earlier and to accommodate more visiting teams. As a result, SSCV athletes will be able to train more at home during these early weeks (at a lower cost, and missing less school), and local Vail businesses (hotels, restaurants, etc.) will benefit from a welcome injection of activity during this slow season. In fact, the projected impact to the local Vail economy is nearly \$1M each year.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the USFS for its very thorough review of this project. This is a valuable project for the Vail community which I would very much like to see approved and developed.

Thank you,  
John Keane