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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As longtime property owners of Cook County and Lutsen Mountains season ski pass holders, we are writing today to provide our comments to the Forest Service on the proposed Lutsen Mountains Ski Area Expansion project.

My parents starting visiting Lutsen to ski in the mid-1960s (they still talk about the beauty and the cold!) and we started bringing our children to ski and hike in the area in the early 2000s. Nearly 12 years ago we decided to purchase a home just off of Ski Hill Road in Lutsen to enjoy and share the area and activities with our family and friends. Our children have grown up skiing at Lutsen Mountains and now they are bringing their friends and significant others to ski and hike in the area. Like the changes I saw from the time my parents skied at Lutsen to today, the proposed expansion is so exciting to see. I have confidence that the additional terrain will be added in a well-planned and thoughtful way.

Over the years the owners of Lutsen Mountains have invested in their business and the land in a responsible way that has been evident over the years and excellent for the area. Ironically, and in comparison, I think of the difference in the investment they have made compared to another ski area I visited growing up - Telemark in Cable, Wisconsin. It was sad to see the lack of investment and the closing of this recreation area (in a vibrant Nordic Skiing and lake recreation areas) and, with Lutsen's investment, it is easy to see that the socio-economic benefits from increased recreation such as more jobs and tax base are good for our community in both the short and long run when a business continues to invest.

A few other points:

oI have skied in areas out west that are on leased public land and have noted the beauty of the forest that has been made accessible to others in a responsible way and managed in partnership with local officials.

oOutdoor recreation, and alpine skiing, in particular, is a "clean industry" with very limited negative effects on clean air, clean water and other natural resources.

oWinter 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 in general. As a vacation rental owner (a second property we have), my guests either come to enjoy the winter skiing or the fall and summer hiking - all want to enjoy the outdoors. They enjoy knowing Lutsen Mountains is beautiful option for them for both recreation and entertainment.

oApproving this project helps the Forest Service implement the Superior NF land management plan and provides the American public with more uses of their public lands. This project helps the Forest Service deliver its mission.

oExcellent project design allows for an alternative route for the Superior Hiking Trail (now a part of the North Country Trail). As a board member of the Superior Hiking Trail Association, I'm familiar with the fact that Lutsen Mountains has agreed to coordinate with the Superior Hiking Trail Association for an alternate route project.

Thank you so much for allowing me to comment on this important expansion project. I look forward to seeing what happens next.