

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/3/2020 12:40:31 AM

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Organization: Arkansas Valley Audubon Society

Title: President

Comments: Arkansas Valley Audubon Society (AVAS), composed of 500+ members who bird and wildlife watch in the Durango area, is writing in opposition to the ski area expansion that threatens Canada Lynx habitat. Ski area expansion does not justify destroying lynx habitat so a corporation can make more money. Sixty eight percent(68%) of Americans say wildlife and its habitat are important to them. Americans, now more than ever, want wildlife and the environment protected. Canada Lynx and cutthroat trout will be adversely impacted by this expansion. The expansion plan ignores climate change as it rushes to cut down thousands of mature spruce trees that sequester carbon to make room for its ski runs. Where's the detailed analysis of climate change impacts? What's the rush to approve this project? The Forest Service needs to slow this project down; require a full environmental analysis; wait for Fish & Wildlife's analysis of lynx activity and habitat connectivity in the Purgatory area; and require that the ski area make a thorough carbon footprint analysis before any development is allowed.