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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Date: July 3, 2020

Subject: Purgatory Resort Ice Creel Ski Pod expansion project #57877

San Juan Forest Service,

Regarding the expansion of the Purgatory Ski area, the owner's wish to expand this ski area, in no way justifies the destruction of important lynx habitat (i.e., dense spruce forest and shrub-dotted meadows teeming with various prey species). The Ice Creek lift pod was purposefully dropped from the 2008 Master Development Plan specifically because of concerns of degrading lynx habitat. And since 2008, research indicates 'high habitat use' in this region for lynx, a species classified as threatened by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Further, any additional development in the East Hermosa Creek watershed will have a negative effect on current efforts to revive the cutthroat trout population in this stream and is completely unacceptable. The environmental analysis for the proposed ski area expansion fails miserably to present any development alternatives to the Ice Creek Pod. In addition, Purgatory has made no effort to offset their carbon footprint as other ski areas have done. Instead, they dodge their corporate responsibility in mitigating the threat of warming temperatures and will gladly sacrifice dozens of acres of carbon-sequestering mature spruce trees.

The San Juan National Forest officials must insist on a detailed analysis of climate change consequences for all projects proposed on our national forest, including ski area expansions.

I believe it is incumbent upon the Forest Service to slow the environmental analysis process in order to:

- 1.Allow consideration of possible ski run development in areas that aren't destructive to lynx and trout habitat
- 2.Allow the Fish & Wildlife to fully analyze lynx activity and habitat in the Purgatory area
- 3.Require Purgatory to undertake a thorough greenhouse gas/carbon footprint analysis for any development plans.

Our forests are our greatest National treasure, Americans cannot afford to trash them or give them away. We refuse to watch our wildlife and their forest habitats disappear because of inaction, bad planning, or willful destruction. The Forest Service's mission is "...To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations." As Americans, we expect our wildlife and forests to be preserved for their continued use and enjoyment by current and future generations. We also depend upon Forest Service officials and staff for their guidance, integrity, protection, and care of our forests and the wildlife living in them. Thank you for this opportunity to express my views.

Sincerely,

Lee Ann Bennett, Forest advocate