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First name: Lily

Last name: Miezejeski

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I have some specific comments and concerns regarding this improvement project. First, the project specific plan amendment is troubling. I understand the forest plan to be the foundation for guiding decisions on national forests. What is the point of having a forest plan if the agency is going to allow exceptions for whenever a project is about to violate it? If that's the case, then something more programmatic should be implemented. There must have been valid reasons for having the standard for raptors in the first place! Additionally, I believe that there was a one-time exemption already put through in this area! Are all of these one-time waivers going to add up to just one? I believe this exception is in violation of any such planning rule, if one exists. I fail to understand the reasoning provided. Current research does not seem to coincide with the idea that the raptors would be unaffected. Integrity seems to be lacking. Hopefully the Forest Service will coordinate with state agencies that seem to have a better understanding of wildlife.

Secondly, the notion that parking demands would not increase is nonsensical. Where is the evidence for this? It seems to reason that if terrain opens up, then more people would want to experience it. Steamboat is one of the state's largest ski areas. And has there not been an increase of visitor use over the years anyways? If this is actually not the case, there needs to be actual data backing up parking availability.

Furthermore, the Forest Service states that socioeconomics and environmental justice would not be meaningfully impacted by this project. Shouldn't we be trying to impact the current disparity on this ski resort? The resort caters to affluent, white demographics. Whoever oversees this ski resort should read Black Faces, White Spaces. If the Forest Service "partners" with a private corporation, they should ensure that values of inclusivity are honored, and that the public agency is not just providing a conduit for private profits. The documents state that low income and minority populations would still have the same or similar access to public lands. So, in relation to skiing on ski resorts, that access is minimal to none. How is this not an issue? Federal agencies across the country are claiming to address inequality. It seems like they are just paying lip service and actually ignoring any issues out there. Please address this glaring concern that is on the minds of many across the nation.

If all of these issues (mine, as well as other commentors and community members) are critically evaluated and considered, then it seems to reason that other alternatives should be considered in detail. At the very least, there should be an alternative that protects raptor habitat instead of disregarding an already approved Forest Plan. Additionally, there should be actual research conducted with results provided to the public that depicts the current parking situation and forecasted use.

Finally, there are a lot of assertions made on the basis that this project will adhere to these so-called "design criteria." It seems to me that I hardly ever see Forest Service employees making sure that these stipulations will be enforced. Do you plan on hiring someone to oversee construction, application, and execution? Unless there is someone stationed at the actual job site during the entirety of the project, it is at best a dubious claim to state that these will be followed.

Thank you for taking my comments into consideration. I hope that the Forest Service truly values the process and public participation.