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First name: Canyon

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I do not support implementation of the mountain coaster. My reasoning is two-fold:

1) Degradation of wilderness experience. As a lifelong Sandia Park resident, I have frequented this southwestern corner of the Sandia Peak Ski Area for many years, on both the Golden Eagle MTB trail and adjacent USFS trails (10K, South Crest) in the summer, and on the ski slopes during the winter. I would not enjoy the solitude and quiet taken away by the addition of infrastructure, astronomically increased visitor numbers, and inevitable unpleasant noise, as the area holds significant, long-existing cultural and sentimental meaning for me, and for many other locals that I know.

2) Degradation of wildlife habitat, particularly that of mule deer. As a lifelong resident and user of the area, a professional rangeland manager and forestry contractor, and exceptionally experienced big game hunter & hunting guide, I know this part of the Sandia Peak Ski Area to be of high value to mule deer. As a quieter and less-visited area relative to other parts of the Tram/Crest area, mule deer take advantage of the space, quiet, easy escape into the adjacent Sandia Mountain Wilderness, and thrive in the artificial ecotones that the ski run clearcuts provide, in an area otherwise dominated by overgrown subalpine timber with relatively miniscule forage value. In my many years of frequenting all areas of the Sandia Mountains, I have noted significantly higher overall deer numbers and ASTRONOMICALLY higher fawn numbers on the ski area, and this southwestern corner of the ski area in particular. The addition of the mountain coaster, with the presence of infrastructure, enormous increase in visitor numbers, and the resulting loud, incessant human noise during the summer months, would greatly disturb mule deer patterns here, especially in the warm season when many Sandia mule deer are in the highest terrain for both fawning and quality summer forage. The Sandia Mountains host one of the most robust mule deer populations in the state. Let's keep it that way by keeping an area of critical importance to them undeveloped.

I've attached a photo of a mule deer buck, one of dozens I saw in a single October 2019 evening, in a strip of timber between the Inhibition and Fred's Run ski trails, right on where the proposed mountain coaster would be constructed.