

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/2/2021 4:16:58 PM

First name: Jim

Last name: Creek

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Ice Creek chairlift.

Being a life long Colorado resident, and having my first season pass at Purgatory in 1972 and as a current pass holder as well as a long time snowmobiler, I have some comments on this very special area.

There are multiple issues involved in this proposal that all are inter-related yet separate.

My first concern is the current condition and use of Chair 4. I witnessed first hand this winter how under-utilized and in dire need of an upgrade this chair is. There is a lot of beginner trails served by chair 4 that are under-utilized due it being outdated, slow and non-reliable. If it was upgraded to higher speed lift it would attract more beginner skiers as well as more advanced skiers to get to the backside more quickly.

Regardless if the Ice Creek lift is approved or not, the current lower snowmobile by-pass trail needs to be addressed. It should have never been put in at the current location due to the steep slope, aspect, and inability of less experienced riders to make the climb as it leaves Hermosa Park road at the ski area boundary. Even in "normal" snow years, this by-pass melts out quickly and therefore shuts down snowmobile access to a very large area that otherwise should be open.

Currently the snowmobile touring company leads their tours up the Hermosa park road through Purgatory Ski Area on the "Yellow Brick Road" ski run. As far as I know, there have been no incidents where a skier has collided with a snowmobile.

Until a proper by-pass has been constructed, this forest service road should be shared with snowmobilers and skiers. By proper signing, rope closure separations on corners, bamboo poles marking the divide of the trail, speed limit of 15 mph, education and enforcement as well as orange flags attached to snowmobilers as outlined on the skier safety act when a snowmobile operates in a ski area, snowmobiles should allowed on this access road/ ski trail.

In addition, when the ski area is not open during normal business hours snowmobiling should be allowed on this forest service access road.

One issue that I have not seen addressed in this proposal is the snow-cat ski operation that also currently uses this area. By limiting the snowmobile access into this area by the current non-functioning by-pass trail, it indirectly limits the use of sled-ski hybrid skiers that have a legal right to be in the snow-cat ski permit use area. I feel that in the past this is one reason that Purgatory has not been more willing to work with the snowmobile community to keep this expansive area for their high paying clients utilizing the snow-cat ski operation. I have also seen first hand how the snow-cat ski operators have used their snow cats to make a very rough trail by using snow cats to "rough up" the trail by turning side to side, making operating a snowmobile difficult on the Hermosa Park road.

Parking is another major issue that impacts snowmobilers greatly. The current parking situation is not friendly to snowmobilers and there is no easy solution for this. I have seen first hand the congestion, and "harassment" by Purgatory Parking services towards snowmobilers. It is too bad that there is not a way to park trucks and trailers down by the Purgatory Security office / dog sled area on the old access road and have a route that connects with Hermosa park road on the first big switch back.

As far as my comments on the Ice Creek chairlift I am in favor of it pending all water quality, fisheries, lynx habitat, grazing allotments, timber, fire mitigation, summer OHV use, access for maintenance and utilities, fencing and re-vegetation after construction are all addressed.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.