Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/7/2021 10:12:28 PM
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Title:
Comments: I am writing this comment in support of the Lutsen SUP alternatives 2 and 3. I have been following the proposal for a year and a half now and have read through the Master Plan documentation, reviewed the draft EIS, and attended the Superior National Forest's open house for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to formulate my comments. I agree and relate with Lutsen's reasoning for expansion and long-term survival of the ski hill and think that this is a beneficial and appropriate recreational use for this Forest Service Land.

I lived in Duluth for many years, and still reside in MN today. While in Duluth I really learned about the treasure of the North Shore and the abundance of outdoor recreational activities available to us and I want to be a part of this process to make sure that the area retains and improves upon these characteristics of the area that I love. I have extensively hiked the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT), fished the North Shore streams, paddled the area lakes, hunted in the woods for grouse, biked the area trails, and skied at Lutsen for downhill ski races and training throughout high school and in my college years. As a SHT hiker myself, I do not believe this proposal would significantly affect the SHT in a negative way besides some rerouting in alternative 2 because the affected area is relatively short and already is adjacent to the ski area. The alternative 3 proposal is even better and would have negligible impacts to the trail as no rerouting is necessary. I believe many other potential recreational uses of the land that have been discussed are very minimally utilized within the SUP boundaries today, especially due to the steeply sloped terrain limiting easy access and this should be taken into consideration during the decision making. I also have spent time backcountry skiing in Colorado and Wyoming, and I believe that while this activity is possible on Moose Mountain, this is very limited and not the best use for this forest land. The snowpack out West is much deeper and more dependable than it is on Moose Mountain, and the skiable lines are more open with fewer trees in the Rockies compared to the Lutsen Area. The Moose Mountain terrain would be very difficult to navigate without the clearing of underbrush and the selective removal of trees, and this is an improvement that Lutsen Mountains is planning to act on and is proposing within the SUP boundaries better utilizing the land for recreation and opening it up to be enjoyed by more people than would otherwise be possible.

Now that I am past my ski racing days, I am returning to Lutsen with my wife and kids for family vacations. The primary complaint that I hear from them is that there is not enough beginner and low-intermediate terrain as they are young and less experienced skiers. This issue essentially confines them to a few runs on Ullr Mountain. This lack of beginner terrain on much of the existing ski area has caused us to look for alternative ski trip locations further away, so I am pleased they are addressing this in the proposal. The expansion would make this a much more family friendly resort for all of us to enjoy by allowing me to ski more difficult terrain on Eagle and Moose Mountains and allowing them more beginner options on these other mountains that are noted on the expansion plan maps. As more terrain is created in the future on Moose Mountain this would allow them to advance in their abilities and find interest in this new terrain to explore for days of enjoyable skiing on each trip. This will help make Lutsen a destination for my family and keep us and our money local versus making ski trips out West. I think this is not only a benefit for the local economy, but also has a positive environmental impact by drawing skiers to this great local option thus minimizing travel distances compared to trips to the Western mountain states which Minnesotans are known to travel to often in the winter for better skiing opportunities.

I do like the idea of some additional lift accessible expert terrain off the North side of Moose Mountain as shown in alternative 2, but I understand the reason why alternative 3 was created. Alternative 2 seems to be the best option for the variety of skiable terrain, but alternative 3 appears to be a more environmentally conscious option that minimizes the impacts to the SHT and to certain tree groups by not disturbing areas of interest on the North Side and in the Legacy patch areas. I also liked what I heard at the open house that there would be monitoring of the watershed to make sure that the ongoing ski area activities are not negatively affecting the Poplar River watershed. I am not concerned about the changes to the views because parts of Moose and Eagle are already

significantly developed, and this would just be a continuation of this existing landscape use. If you took a picture of Moose or Eagle Mountains today you would see ski runs, so it is not as if the addition of runs would be altering a pristine view. Ski runs in my mind are also minimally invasive to me visually, especially if they are not anticipating the use of night skiing and during the summertime they will fill in with green vegetation. Overall, I would slightly prefer alternative 2 for some more varied expert terrain, but I am also very excited and supportive of the additional mix of terrain and broader resort improvements provided by alternative 3.

I am looking forward to the proposed expansion and the memories my family will make together here at Lutsen. I believe this plan is the right thing for this area and will bring many more families to the area to recreate and enjoy the great outdoors together. It will also bring more economic stability to the region during the tourist slow season on the North Shore and help businesses retain talent. The environmental implications have been studied extensively in the EIS and any impacts seem to be manageable, acceptable, and not detrimental the the Superior National Forest. Thank you for your consideration of my support for the SUP and I hope that the recreational benefits are put into action in the form of Alternative 2 or 3.