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First name: Ben

Last name: Hinz

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Lutsen Mountains Ski Area Expansion Project

As a lifelong Minnesota resident and frequent north shore visitor I oppose any expansion of Lutsen Mountains Ski Area and support Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative.

Page 6 of the EIS details the proposed Alternative 2 and 3 expansions which would almost double the existing size of Lutsen Ski Area adding an additional 174.5 and 167.2 (pgs 7 and 8) acres. Included in this expansion would be utilities, lifts, a chalet on Moose Mountain, roads, structures and snowmaking machines for all proposed new runs.

In addition Alternative 2 (page 7) proposes to reroute a 1.7 mile section of the Superior Hiking Trail which would not only degrade quality of the trail itself but also result in many publications (books, maps, etc) to be inaccurate. The SHT is beloved, and rightly so. The section from Onion River, up Moose Mountain (which I've hiked many times) is one of the gems of the SHT and should not be allowed to be moved or altered.

Alternative 3 would not realign the SHT (page 9) however it would add permanent roads degrading the area surrounding the trail and leading to runoff to both the Poplar River and Lake Superior. Permanent damage to vegetation, soil erosion and wildlife (such as brooktrout in the Poplar River) would all be a result of Alternatives 2 and 3. Impervious roads and parking lots, pollution from increased traffic (oil and fluids in addition to air pollution) would negatively impact the surrounding area.

The water needed for snowmaking, as well as increased visitor usage, is of great concern. As you know this area (Superior National Golf Course) was already fined for illegally pumping water from the Poplar River. How much more water are we willing to pollute to allow Lutsen owners to make more money?

Finally, as a skier the Sawtooth 'Mountains' are never going to be a significant draw for a terrain perspective. Hopes of a 172% visitation increase over 25 years (page 55) are a pipedream. Sure, people go to Lutsen because it's close and it's there but it's certainly not a destination in that capacity.

I could go on and on but who's really listening? Why would the vast majority of Minnesota residents, and American citizens, give away ever shrinking wild land for the benefit of so few individuals? The answer is we simply won't. The only persons who want more scars on the land are those folks who have an active interest in Lutsen Mountain Ski Area. It's shameful that we are presented with a 344 page EIS and that possible expansion of Lutsen Ski Area is even a consideration.

I implore you to choose Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative.

Ben Hinz

10151 Mississippi Blvd NW  
Coon Rapids MN 55433