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First name: Philip

Last name: Handmaker

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to advocate for protecting the precious Rio Hondo by scaling back the proposed construction projects.

Being situated at the top of the watershed for the Rio Hondo, Taos Ski Valley (TSV) bears a huge responsibility to protect the quantity and quality of water that continues downstream to the communities that depend on this mighty little river. Some of TSV's proposed projects-because of where they are slated to occur-will likely cause significant negative impacts on the Rio Hondo, both its quantity and quality, and should not be approved at this time, pending a full Environmental Impact Statement.

In particular, I am concerned about the following aspects:

- 1) The base-to-base gondola should be sited in such a way as to minimize erosion into and disturbance of the river.
- 2) The nordic ski area will require a great deal of thinning and grading, likewise impacting the river, particularly during construction. While I love nordic skiing, the narrow valley topography would require any trails to be quite close to the Rio and consequently cause problems.
- 3) There is no way that a five-million-gallon water tank on the mountain can be filled without greatly reducing the quantity of water that flows downhill to feed the Rio Hondo. Where will that water come from? Scientists are finding that groundwater and surface water are inextricably linked.

In my meager understanding, some of TSV's projects are far less likely to negatively impact the river. For example, the replacement of lifts and the construction of the new on-mountain restaurant will be situated far enough away from the pristine waterway.

Overall, the enormous scope of these projects demands a full Environmental Impact Statement, not just a cursory Environmental Assessment. The Rio Hondo is too precious, too fragile, and too critical for people and wildlife downstream to proceed with anything less.

If TSV can manage the mountain's offerings within the limits of what their water resources can sustain, they will bequeath a beautiful resort-and a thriving ecosystem-to future generations. If that isn't B Corp values, what is?

Walk the talk, do the right thing, and conduct a full EIS. Do it for the future of the Rio Hondo and all who depend on it.