

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/2/2022 3:42:14 PM

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Comments: I am writing this letter to address the Taos Ski Valley Gondola and Other Improvements Project. I have worked for the Taos Ski Valley for 30+ years. I was hired by Ernie Blake< who had a vision of a small European village with amazing skiing connected to a town nearby. Since he died in 1989 there has been a shift in that vision. When the Village and the Valley cut ties with the town of Taos and incorporated the real transition began. With no regard for centuries old inhabitants downstream they have begun to increase the detrimental effects on the Rio Hondo exponentially.

The sewage treatment plant is inadequate, the effluent regularly exceeds limits for many pollutants. The amount of water drawn from the watershed has increased exponentially as well, to the detriment of aquatic and terrestrial creatures. Their plans to increase the numbers of hotel rooms and infrastructure cannot be supported by the fragile ecosystem of the Wheeler Peak WILDERNESS. The fact that there is already so much development makes the designation of Wilderness somewhat ridiculous.

For centuries people downstream have relied on the Rio Hondo for their existence, the Ski Valley and Village are less than 70 years old. To allow them precedence over historical stewards of the river would be shameful. People who are not part of the greater Taos community should not control this most important resource no matter how much money they have. we cannot deny there is less snow and therefore less water every season. The village and the Ski Valley should be required to reuse their effluent for snowmaking and watering grass. They tell us its treated to a drinkable standard...

In conclusion, there has not been nearly enough done to protect the Rio Hondo watershed from the impacts of projects done by Taos Ski Valley. It is time for a moratorium on development by the Ski Valley and the Village. They need to follow their own motto of Better not Bigger and take a step back so this ecosystem can adjust to a changing climate. Please do NOT give permission for all of these projects to move forward.

Sincerely, Christine Lowry