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Organization:

Title:

Comments: BASE to BASE GONDOLA

I object to the building of this structure

Page 22 of the EA states that the CCC (comfort carrying capacity) of the ski area is 4,310 guests. The building of the gondola it is stated in the EA plan would only marginally increase that number. I question that assumption. The EA states that the increase in the number of guests will be 172. How was this number reached? I do not believe that the ski area would invest millions for such a small increase in numbers.

The EA does not state how many trees will be cut down. How much land will be disturbed or its impact on the general environment. I believe this needs further clarification on the part of the Carson National Forest. Page 49 of the EA states that there would be no impact to the Lake Fork creek and the immediate area where this construction would take place. But it fails to point out what impact the construction phase would have on the immediate area. Neither is air quality taken into account. Countless truck and construction equipment will be needed to complete this project. Lastly, the gondola will be an eyesore.

Soundscape

Page 25 states that there is little impact of existing TSV operations on the soundscape of the WPW during the winter. This is DEAD WRONG!! the Forest Service needs to do further investigation into the endless noise coming from Lift #4, The Phoenix and Bavarian restaurant. Music blasts during operational hours constantly and can certainly be heard in the Wheeler wilderness. In addition, there is the constant noise from machinery. This noise bring considerable air pollution with it also. I suggest you send Forest Service members up to the ski area to monitor the continual noise.

Restaurant construction near lift #7 & the relocation of the Whistlestop restaurant

The lift #7 restaurant will be another eyesore on the mountain similar to the the Kachina Lift. I believe this an unnecessary burden to the mountain area. Soil and land features will be disturbed to install water lines, electric lines and sewage lines. In addition there are sufficient restaurants at the base area.

It is quite evident that CEO David Norden's has no concern for the environment and that TSV is proving to be horrible stewards to the area in the SUP and the surrounding lands.

It is time to put the brakes on the destructive development at Taos Ski Valley. How many more buildings and structures need to be erected before the ski area owners and management are happy? How much more water needs to be diverted away from the forest and the residents living in the surrounding areas below? How many trees need to be cut down before TSV is finally satiated. As a resident of Taos County, a skier and season pass holder at TSV, I strongly object to any more so called "improvements".

TSV's grandiose plans do not appear to take into account the limited access to the ski area on road #150. This road has only one lane in each direction. It is already overly burdened during the winter months. This road is narrow and steep in many sections. Its serpentine path already makes for a dangerous journey during snow and rain events. What will it be like in the future as TSV's endless plans metastasize. The road is also subjected to rock fall during periods of warming. Due to the location of this steep canyon road, hemmed in by a river on one side and cliffs on the other, it can only accommodate a certain number of cars. Driving up this road on a winter weekend or after a snow event, one quickly becomes aware of this limiting factor to expansion.

Upon arrival at the ski area, one realizes that further expansion is also limited by the amount of parking. It is not uncommon to see cars parked along the side of the road on weekends. This further limits safe entry and exit into

TSV. These two factors alone are a sufficient reason to stop this unbridled growth. How many more people can TSV accommodate? There is only so much space.

In addition to being an eyesore, the proposed 3,700 foot gondola would be installed to the detriment of the surrounding forest. No one has mentioned how many trees will be sacrificed nor how many animals will be displaced. How many trucks and earth moving equipment will be used for its installation? Isn't there already enough noise, dust and congestion due to all the other building projects? I was under the impression that TSV was a place to go skiing. It seems that skiing is now taking a back seat to real estate development. Do we really believe that this gondola is going to cut back on the amount of traffic heading up to lift # 4? What about those who do not wish to be without their vehicles nearby. America's love affair with the car is not going to be replaced by this gondola. Will TSV allow hikers, snowshoer's and backcountry skiers on their way to William's Lake to ride the gondola for free in order to relieve the congestion on the road? I doubt it.

I also believe the relocation and expansion of the Whistle stop and the addition of a slope side restaurant near lift #7 are unjustified. At present, there are at least seven restaurants surrounding the base of the ski area. There is little need for these endless additions and "improvements " The unneeded infrastructure will bring added water usage at a time when we are facing continuous drought. It has been widely publicized in the Taos News that the ski valley's water system is in an abysmal state. 83% of its water is lost due to leaks or is simply unaccounted for. Do we really need to increase water usage at a time when we should be conserving water?

The ski area opens in late November and closes in early April. At best there are only 136 days of skiing. If we take into account climate change causing shorter winters, higher temperatures and less snowfall, the reality will be shorter ski seasons. Is all of this destruction to the environment worthy of 136 days of skiing, at most? Most years the lift #4 area does not open before Christmas. Come spring, the number of people visiting the ski area falls off sharply. The gondola will be grossly underutilized during the spring, summer and fall. This "greatly needed infrastructure" will sit idle for the majority of the year. I believe we are losing sight of what is really going on at TSV. TSV has become the object of one man's hubris, greed and ego. Let's not allow the desires of Mr. Bacon to come before the residents of Taos County.

Let's not pave paradise and put up a parking lot to para-phrase Joni Mitchell.

Thank you,