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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a native Arkansan and an avid user of our parks, I oppose the implementation of these chair lifts. I have no objection to adding the number of mountain bike trails and I welcome anyone who wishes to come to our parks in the pursuit of outdoor recreation. However, the best part about our parks is the low intensity use. They are a place to escape and adding several huge cables across a valley would permanently alter the view as well as render the entire area a mountain biking only venue. I am all for accessibility, but we are talking about mountain bikers. They are able to readily access the whole area - they can climb a hill under their own power. Something as simple as a shuttle system would generate the same result with a much, much less obvious impact to the landscape.

Furthermore, the number of other commenters who have indicated they will travel up from the DFW area is troubling. Mena could certainly benefit from new visitors to the area, but we are talking about essentially building a public ski lodge with lifts - Arkansas style.

The economic benefits would be marginal as most people will stay at a chain hotel (it will come if the benefit is there) or camp in the park. Sure, a few local places will see an uptick in business, but not the community as a whole. Visitors are going to load up in DFW:

1. With groceries and equipment that was purchased in DFW,
2. Then they are going to stay for the weekend in lodging that is either government-owned or a new chain hotel that will take advantage of the opportunity.
3. They will spend some money at the lodge on chairlifts, but probably not in Mena because the town itself is several miles away from the proposed site.
4. Finally, they will drive back to DFW having possibly spent \$0 in Mena.
5. In the process, they will have used Arkansas roads and infrastructure to send money to the federal government and possibly the State of Arkansas as a whole. Very little local money is going to result from this project.

We are talking about a project that will essentially trade an Arkansas valley for a measly few dollars from Texas. Arkansas will bear the burden of Texas recreation, not benefit from it.

No offense to Texans. I view this as a state issue, not a personal one. Texans are welcome to come spend money in my state whenever they like.

If the economic incentive is there, then a private enterprise can fill the gap. Wal-Mart is funding a tremendous trail system in NWA - let them come down and pay for all of this. Otherwise, as this is a public project that primarily benefits Texas citizens, let Texas tax dollars pay for it on Texas real estate.