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Comments: Hello, I am writing to comment regarding the proposed implementation of project #61390, Taos Ski Valley Gondola and Other Improvements .

I find that the Environmental Assessment published to green light these projects does not adequately address potential impacts these projects may have on the local environment and community, nor does it offer any viable alternatives to the implementation of these projects.

I will address each of the projects separately:

Base to Base Gondola

The EA does not consider the potential impact to the current free and unfettered access by the public to the Williams Lake/Wheeler Peak trails and surrounding wilderness. I believe a potential exists that once the gondola were to be put into service, TSVI could choose to request the Village of Taos Ski Valley to restrict the road from the main base area to the trailhead parking lot to use by residents and TSVI only. Also there is no mention of what fee if any that TSVI could charge the non skiing public to use to Gondola to access the trails. Also, there is no adequate description addressing potential impacts Gondola construction could have on Rio Hondo water quality and wildlife disturbance within the SUP and surrounding Forest lands.

Nor are any alternatives offered, such as increasing the capacity of Lift #2 to increase the number of skiers per hour able to reach the Kachina base via lifts 1 and 2, or simply the alternative if no action at all.

An Environmental Impact Statement is required to fully address these potential impacts.

Replacing Whistle Stop Cafe and Developing new Restaurant at top of lift 7

The EA does not adequately address in detail the potential water use increase, nor does it provide a detailed description of plans for sewage treatment, and the potential environmental impact thereof.

The EA states that this will not increase the Ski Areas water use beyond the current allotment, but offers no proof of this being the case.

Both increased water use and sewage treatment have the potential to create adverse impacts upon the quality and quantity of water in the upper Rio Hondo.

The EA offers no alternatives to implementation of these projects, such as use of the Phoenix Restaurant (currently in disuse) or use of existing restaurants in main base area.

An Environmental Impact Statement is required to adequately address these potential impacts and alternatives to implementation of these projects.

Booster Tank for Snowmaking and Fire Suppression.

The EA does not adequately address the increased water use from the Ski Valley's current allotment, specifically how timing of drawing water to fill the tank as well as intake volume could affect the flow of water in the Rio Hondo. The EA also states that the creation of this tank and subsequent storage and use of water therein will not go beyond the ski valleys current allotment, but states no actual proof or quantities.

Nowhere in the EA is the current volume of water use from the allotment stated for current Ski Valley operations. A revelation of this quantity is necessary to fully evaluate the increase in water use that All of the projects under consideration in this phase of Master Plan implementation will create. Again, a full Environmental Impact Statement is necessary to investigate and quantify these potential impacts.

