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Comments: My Comments & Concerns about this Project:

This project must be analyzed with an Environmental Impact Statement that includes alternatives to the Proposed Action based on input received from public comments.

The range of alternatives should include alternatives without the base-to-base gondola and without the water tank and booster station. Alternatives are required in the NEPA process.

The water rights assumption in the EA is incorrect. The EIS should consider Taos Ski Valley's proposals in light of the resort's actual water rights of 21.45 acre-feet, which is limited to 0.11 acre-feet of daily use allowed between April 11th and October 25th. The EIS should analyze an alternative that places TSVI's potential water usage in context of the resort's allocated water rights.

A robust Environmental Impact Statement is necessary to address: the current impact of the Taos Ski Valley Inc.'s operations on the Rio Hondo water quality and abundance, the local environment - biodiversity loss, and the local economy. An EIS should provide alternative options for meeting the ski resorts objectives should current or any expansion reveal (further) negative impacts to the above areas of concern mentioned here.

I am concerned that the EA fails to disclose impacts to public lands access. The EIS must consider how the gondola will affect public access to the Williams Lake trailhead. This analysis must include consideration of public (non-gondola users) winter access as vital to the USFS duties for public lands access. The possibility of constrained (or closed) access via the historical trail is a major concern. A robust EIS should provide proof that public access to public lands be discrimination, exclusion or constraint.

Given the likely negative impacts to Wilderness access the Forest Service should deny the base-to-base gondola.

The Forest Service should hold off on considering the 5 million gallon water tank, booster station, and new restaurant until the Village of Taos Ski Valley's water infrastructure is stabilized.

There is also the climate crisis to consider as a critical factor in all of these decisions and permits. I am familiar with Zach Weiss's 'Water Stories' and the entire interrelated ecosystem of the water cycle. With ever increasing drought in the western U.S., adding even more extraction of ecosystem resources in a national forest is very errant thinking. The Taos Ski Valley is at the headwaters of the Rio Hondo, and it is imperative that any element that disturbs the healthy balanced systems functioning of the watershed should be stringently analyzed by the Environmental Impact Statement. For instance, adding even more snow-making operations is a negative element in this environmental reality. I have done a cursory amount of research regarding artificial snow (see link):

<https://www.acs.org/education/resources/highschool/chemmatters/past-issues/2018-2019/december-2018/artificial-snow-a-slippery-slope.html#:~:text=Below%20the%20water%20table%2C%20the,biodiversity%20of%20a%20local%20ecosystem.&text=Also%2C%20reservoirs%20have%20been%20created%20to%20supply%20water%20for%20snow%20guns.>

I do not think that adding more negative pressure on the ecosystem from snow making by the ski valley is wise during our current climate crisis dilemma. If a ski season needs to limit access during low snow pack seasons, then that is what our environmental crisis requires of us as land stewards and especially via the permitting

process of the USFS. Given that the TSV Inc. has added year long recreational activities to their operations, there are clearly alternatives available that respect the limits during drought seasons.