

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/22/2023 3:28:21 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As an heir to my ancestral land and water rights in Valdez, I am deeply concerned with the proposed additions to the Taos Ski Valley. Particularly the water tank, new restaurant at the top of lift 7 and the base to base gondola. There are many questions I pose below and strongly request further studies, especially on water quality. I also believe an Environmental Impact Statement process needs to be conducted before any decisions are made.

How is this going to affect the communities downstream? Many people depend on clean water to grow produce and fruit that they sell as their main source of income. If the water is tainted or no longer flowing, many people will not be able to support themselves. Please consider the long term effects on the surrounding areas and local people who have roots going back 200+ years as well as the wildlife and fish.

Where are they planning to get the water for the proposed new restaurant and snow making?

If it is through a new well, how deep is the well? What aquifer are you trying to reach? What are the estimated gallons use per month or year? Has there been studies done to support the sustainability? Is the new water tank and well permitted through the state engineer? How will the proposed new restaurant affect the forest and the environment for years to come?

What's going to happen in a drier year?

Wells are going dry in Arroyo Seco and Valdez. What tables are you trying to get to?

The water from the Taos Ski Valley is the main provider of our springs. If the water is diminished in those tables it will diminish the water in our streams and aquifers.

Do they have a plan on how to replenish that water? Will the water be recycled?

Where does the water that they're using go? Leech lines that replenish the water tables or is it going directly to a sewer plant? How is the wastewater being monitored? Who is monitoring it? Have there been studies done on the water in the Rio Hondo and compared to water tests in previous years?

A lot of locals have stopped fishing the Rio Hondo because they no longer trust the quality of the fish or that they are safe to eat. There has been sludge appearing in our acequias and apparent when the river is low that did not ever used to be there. Have there been studies done on the fish in the river?

When the ski resort has made snow and borrowed water, was it returned and how do they plan on returning borrowed water for making snow? How does one even returned borrowed water once it is used?

Has the NRCS been consulted?

How will the gondola be powered? What electricity will be used? Have you considered how that amount of electricity will affect the wildlife long term? During one of the public meetings, the forest service was asked how many trees would be cut down for the gondola the forest service representatives present did not know. How many trees will be cut down? How will the removal of that many trees affect the soil and soil degradation over time? Roots from trees help keep soil erosion from happening. Have those effects been considered?

I strongly request water testing be done and compared to previous water quality reports of the Rio Hondo before any further construction happens or decisions are made. I also request that the forest service monitor the water quality more closely going forward so there is sufficient data to compare in the years to come when TSV requests more and more development as they most surely will.