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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS,

I am opposed to the Taos Ski Valley, Inc's plan to further develop the Taos Ski Valley in the ways it has proposed. Just a few of my reasons are listed below:

1) Multiple acequeros have spoken out about the degradation that the Taos Ski Valley has already caused to the Rio Hondo watershed, and are opposed to these new plans to further develop the ski valley, which will directly impact the watershed that feeds their agricultural lands. The USFS has an ethical obligation to listen to the acequia communities of Valdez, Arroyo Seco and Arroyo Hondo. Their community needs must come before that of a private corporation, if for no other reason than that their communities predate the existence of the USFS, and even the United States.

2) Expanding the infrastructure at TSV and increasing year-round use of the area increases wildfire risk in an area that will be impossible to evacuate quickly. Fighting a fire in this area will inevitably involve introduction of air-dropped chemical fire-suppressants that will go into the water and soil, affecting wildlife, natural vegetation and downstream agriculture. We are in a long-term drought. Every piece of construction machinery, every car and every person who goes up to the ski valley can potentially introduce fire into the mountains. This puts the entire Taos landscape, including Taos Pueblo and the historic communities of Taos at risk of being destroyed by wildfire.

3) The Taos Ski Valley currently uses a massive amount of water, affecting all downstream users. They plan to continue this usage. As we see less and less snowfall in Taos, the ski valley's needs to make snow will only increase. Again, we are in a longterm drought. The water should be available to wildlife, soil, forests, rivers and the people who live in the area.

4) The impacts of this development on the cultural and economic fabric of Taos County are profound, and cater not to local residents but to high-income tourists. Turning Taos into a recreational playground for tourists is not in the best interest of taxpaying residents who struggle to remain here as the cost of living skyrockets. According to a new economic report by Southwest Marketing & Planning, many of the tourists who are brought to Taos on Taos Air (owned by TSVI) decide to buy vacation homes here. This is driving up property prices, increasing the cost of living, and changing the face of our community. In their comments listed in the report, many Taos Air clients are asking for more flights to Taos, year-round, from more destinations. TSV is asking our town and county governments to subsidize the costs of operating Taos Air, a private enterprise. The current direction of TSVI is not sustainable for our high-mountain desert community.

In summary, I urge the USFS to deny these development plans of Taos Ski Valley, Inc. due to the the direct and indirect negative impacts they will have for the residents of Taos County as well as the wildlife, forests, soil and water that are struggling to survive in drought conditions.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Ariana Kramer

Taos, New Mexico

