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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept these comments as full-throated support for Monarch Mountain's planned No Name expansion project (Ski Area Expansion #61373). As a season pass holder for the past five years, and having skied at Monarch Mountain for more than 20 years, I can attest that growth and expansion of alpine skiing and snowboarding at Monarch Mountain necessitates expanded terrain to allow for better dispersal of active participants. Simply put, the number of skiers and snowboarders that utilize Monarch Mountain has reached a point that expansion of terrain is necessary to ensure an enjoyable experience for all participants.

As noted in Monarch Mountain's Master Development Plan from 2011, the No Name expansion is the culmination of significant improvements (most notably additional parking) that have occurred over the past 12 years. As visitation has grown at Monarch Mountain, the ski area has invested significant capital in facilities and infrastructure that will accommodate additional growth that may occur with the opening of No Name terrain. All of these improvements are necessary to preserve the economic viability of lift-served skiing in Chaffee County to ensure that recreationalists of all ages are able to access winter terrain along the Collegiate Peaks.

As the parent of two Team Monarch athletes, skiing and riding is engrained deeply in our souls. It is important for Team Monarch athletes of all ages to have ample access to plentiful terrain to learn a progression of skiing and riding, growing their skills to continue to recreate on our public lands. In turn, this creates additional future generations of outdoor enthusiasts who will enjoy using our public lands for exercise, interactions with nature, and fun. My children have grown up with skiing as a backbone to their emotional, mental, and physical development and it is my hope that future generations will be able to do the same.

Last, it should be noted that much of the No Name terrain is already utilized as backcountry terrain by Monarch's ski cat operation. Much of the potential impact already exists in the proposed expansion area. Further, tree clearing for ski/snowboard runs will enhance wildlife movement, improve forest health by clearing dead/dying trees impacted by beetles, and give a safe point of access into terrain already used by backcountry skiers. This all makes for a perfect opportunity for access to additional enhanced terrain to continue to make skiing and riding at Monarch a wonderful experience.

I greatly appreciate consideration of these comments, and I hope for a positive review of the proposed terrain expansion plan in conformance with Monarch's Master Development Plan.

Sincerely,

Drew Nelson