

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/25/2024 4:35:46 PM

First name: William

Last name: James

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I firmly oppose the addition of chair lifts. Mountain biking is a fun and responsible use for public lands, but it is also inherently undertaken by fit people who can ride a bike. Meaning there is not a legitimate ADA claim to be made for lifts. They are a measure of convenience, not need.

In weighing that convenience against the permanent and visible nature of these chair lifts, I find it hard to argue that the need outweighs the cost. We're talking about a fundamental change in the landscape. A Disney-esque addition that nobody can rightly say is necessary. Moreover, I have no problem with increasing access to the outdoors. This is a public area - it should be heavily utilized by the public. But the intensive use that one would expect is going to degrade the region as a whole.

Rural roads will need to be maintained without a commensurate increase in local tax dollars. Small businesses that cater to visitors will be pushed out by larger chains. The local wildlife will be displaced by the constant operation of a chair lift.

On and on, the issues add up. Just like with the Buffalo River, this project is an attempt at development that the people of this state do not want. Wild places are enjoyable because they are wild.

Having said that, I will compromise. If there must be chair lifts, limit them. Put a few right next to the lodge.