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Comments on Winter Park Resort Projects 2025 Draft Environmental Assessment

The Cooper Creek development/enhancements are not in line with either Winter Park Resort's goals of sustainability and environmental stewardship nor the Forest Service Management Plan for the Winter Park GeoArea. For these reasons, the Cooper Creek development should be denied.

Lynx habitat and corridors should not be allowed to be disturbed. There are probably uncollared descendants of the collared lynx which studies do not monitor. I personally know someone who had a good long look at a lynx within the present ski area boundary. Stating that Lynx habitat would not be lost on the majority of the SUP is a misleading statement as the majority of the SUP is not in primary Lynx habitat. Although the amount of lynx habitat in the proposed Cooper Creek area is a small percentage of overall lynx habitat in the Rockies, it is a very large percentage of the lynx habitat in proposed development/enhancements of the Cooper Creek area. The area of the Jelly Roll, prime lynx habitat, should be left alone as it is a prime corridor and connector for wide ranging species. Also, the Jelly Roll proposed changes are too close to the tributary of Vasquez Creek. There is already a ski back trail to the Town of Winter Park. A new one destroying prime habitat and travel corridors should not be allowed.

Additionally, no mention was made of wolverine. The area of the Jelly Roll is wolverine habitat. Just as wolves were in the area before reintroduction but no one would publicly admit it, the same applies to wolverines.

It is incorrect to state that disturbances and habitat destruction will have no effect on other species besides wolf or lynx. The effects would be far reaching as species of all types would be forced to different places or possibly to their deaths.

The EA document repeatedly states that species will avoid humans and their disturbances. Where does this end? With all the loss of habitat in the valley, this loss is not looked at in the larger picture. How much habitat loss is too much? Already, there is less than the Forest Management Plan requires. The disturbances will last far beyond the construction phases.

Stating that humans are not likely to be present at night is untrue. Grooming equipment, snowmaking operations and lights will be in the area during night time hours on a regular basis in the winter. This will cause noise, light and air pollution to be present in the proposed Cooper Creek important habitat at night. The current gondola is lit up like a carnival ride at night. Lighting restrictions are a must.

The Cooper Creek proposal would result in increased recreational usage resulting in more traffic with no additional parking planned. Parking is a HUGE problem and currently WPR's Achilles heel. To say the proposed gondola would reduce traffic is probably not true to a significant degree, considering that most of the traffic comes from the front range. Also, if there is not parking for the gondola, people in the valley won't be inclined to use it.

The new proposed hiking (and probably biking) trails should not be allowed. The wildlife need a break from human invasion. Studies have shown how disruptive human used trails are to wildlife.

The EA notes there will be disturbances and destruction of wetlands. It is proven that mitigated wetland do not function as well as the damaged or destroyed natural wetlands. A "watch dog" at Discovery Park during construction would be helpful for wetlands and fens.

The Cooper Creek development and enhancements eliminate and are disruptive for too much habitat and travel corridors and are not in line with the Forest Management Plan. Dollars must not trump the natural environment which we all need to survive.

Sincerely,