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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service, I am writing to oppose the proposed rezoning and large-scale development of the Telluride Lift 7 open space area. This area, currently zoned as open space, serves as a critical ski run-out and a vital ecosystem, and its development would have severe environmental, safety, and cultural consequences. The proposed development site encompasses permanent and seasonal wetlands, which are essential for maintaining ecological balance. These wetlands support a diverse wildlife corridor frequented by fox, raccoon, coyote, bear, deer, marmots, and elk. Every spring ducks and ducklings arrive at the seasonal wetlands at the base of Lift 7. Construction would disrupt this corridor, fragmenting habitats and threatening species survival. Additionally, the area hosts a variety of wild birds vulnerable to light pollution from the proposed development. Light pollution disrupts avian navigation, breeding, and foraging, as documented in studies like those from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, which show artificial light can reduce bird populations by up to 20% in urbanized areas. For humans, light pollution impairs sleep, disrupts circadian rhythm, increases stress, and diminishes the ability to enjoy the night sky, a key concern for Dark Sky advocates who emphasize preserving natural darkness for ecological and cultural value. Safety concerns further underscore the unsuitability of this site. A 2023 landslide from the upper mountain slope sent large boulders crashing into a nearby condo complex, causing significant damage. I personally witnessed a large boulder in 2023 careening down the edge of Stumper and crashing into a pole near Lift 7. These events highlight the geological instability of the area, where steep slopes and loose terrain pose ongoing risks to any development. Building in this zone could endanger future residents and infrastructure. This development would also degrade the quality of life for both wildlife and humans. The transformation of this open space into a European-style ski hub, as envisioned by a landowner, would erode the character of our town, a designated national historic district valued for its unique heritage and natural beauty. The loss of open space would diminish recreational opportunities, reduce biodiversity, and alter the serene, historic ambiance that defines our community. I urge the Forest Service to reject this rezoning proposal to protect critical wetlands, wildlife, and human safety while preserving the town's historic identity and Dark Sky values. Your commitment to conservation can ensure this vital open space remains intact for future generations. Sincerely, Melisa Brady