

Letter 41: Gregory J. Snow, Resident

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 41-1**

The commenter states that the project applicant has caused substantial off-site property damage from a drainage issue involving the placement of a retention pond during a past improvement from previous development. The commenter requests the proposed project be denied until this current drainage issue is resolved.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 1 regarding drainage issues.

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 41-2**

The commenter states that once this drainage issue is resolved, all future development should include protection of all downhill properties, special consideration to additional snowmaking, stringent monitoring requirements, County-hired monitors, and a final drainage report submitted to Aspen Grove.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 1 regarding drainage issues and mitigation measures. The final drainage report identified under mitigation measure 13-3a will be publicly available upon its submittal to the County.

## Letter 42

**Maywan Krach**

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**From:** Somers, Chris <Chris.Somers@lfd.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 02, 2014 1:35 PM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Cc:** Jerusha Hall (JCHall@vailresorts.com); wrock@vailresorts.com  
**Subject:** Northstar's proposed Mountain Master Plan

**Maywan Krach**

**Placer County Community Development Resource Agency, Environmental Coordination Services**  
**3091 County Center Drive**  
**Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603**

**Delivered by email [cdraecs@placer.ca.gov](mailto:cdraecs@placer.ca.gov)**

To,  
Placer County Officials, thank you for your continued thorough review of Northstar's proposed Mountain Master Plan. I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report and want to offer my support for the proposed plan.

There is no real estate associated with the proposed plan featuring exciting new ski terrain yet it appropriately contemplates already-approved, yet-to-be-built residential property that has mitigated traffic and parking impacts. The mountain master plan has it all: new terrain for a variety of expertise among the guests already coming to Northstar, and conservation. This plan isn't about adding new traffic to our roadways, or requiring massive amounts of new infrastructure. But about exciting new access to Sawtooth Range!

I have enjoyed the education I received on the Habitat Management Plan and how the mountain master plan will help implement such smart habitat and land use goals. I am proud of our community's collaborative efforts and only hope other ski areas and communities will be as thoughtful. Vail Resorts, and Booth Creek Ski Holdings before them, took their time – many, many years, in fact – to create a master plan that is appropriate, needed and will serve our community for the next 20 years, at least.

I want to add my appreciation that there will be no improvements in the Tahoe Basin. I also have reviewed the snowmaking plans and think they, too, are appropriate and the water needs are accounted for. Bill and his team at Northstar are doing a great job!

Many thanks for your hard work and good luck!

Feel free to contact me if you require any clarification.

Thank you,

Chris Somers  
370 Skidder Trail  
Truckee, CA 96161

**Chris Somers**

*Institutional Retirement Sales Director  
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Letter 42: Chris Somers, Resident

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 42-1**

The commenter expresses support for the Draft EIR and the proposed project.

This comment is noted.

## Letter 43

### Maywan Krach

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**From:** Jim Steeb <jjimsteeb@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 09, 2014 2:43 PM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services; jjimsteeb@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Vail Northstar EIR Master Plan

Maywan Krach,  
Placer County Community Development Resource Agency  
Environmental Coordination Services  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603

Dear Maywah Krach,

I am a homeowner in Aspen Grove downhill from the Northstar development in Placer County. For nearly the past 10 years, our association, has been painfully fighting Vail/East West Properties/Northstar over the poor placement and use of a "retention pond" installed just north of our property during their last expansion. Our condominium association has been fighting in court for years and won in 2012. The amount of damage is amazing in terms of structural building damage, loss of trees buffering the expanded parking lot that died due to standing in water, the loss of much of our precious Aspen Grove for which our community is named, a new parking lot which is water soaked and cracking, water running freely on the property which never happened in the prior 30 years of the community existing.

NorthStar already admitted guilt years ago in their trying to rectify their problem prior to our lawsuit coming before a judge. In light of their behavior and the court's decision it is appalling that they are now appealing the court's decision while simultaneously requesting further expansion from the county. Their appeal is simply an obvious attempt to bleed our community hoping that in doing so we will be unable to prevail. Placer county has a hand in all of this having approved a number of the plans while in court testimony the engineers revealed they failed to execute properly - where was Placer County in reviewing the engineers work?

43-1

Now Vail/NorthStar wish to expand again putting our community at potentially greater risk as well as other surrounding communities as well. Prior to Placer county approving any additional plans we simply request that the county stand up and demand that Vail/NorthStar resolve the Aspen Grove flooding problem and clean up the mess they created in their prior expansion. Correcting their prior sins could result in meaningful changes to the new plans they have proposed. Placer is aware of the potential impact and should act to deny any expansion until resolved. Please read the court's findings and deny any expansion until this matter is resolved.

Sincerely  
James and Michele Steeb  
3131 Aspen Grove  
Truckee, CA 96161

Letter 43: James & Michele Steeb, Residents

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 43-1**

The commenters state that there is a pending lawsuit against the project applicant regarding a previously installed retention pond and that this pond has caused damage to the Aspen Grove property. The commenters state that the County should not allow implementation of the proposed project before the applicant resolves the issues surrounding the defective retention pond.

The commenters are referred to Master Response 1.

## Letter 44

January 13, 2014

VIA E-MAIL [CDRAECS@PLACER.CA.GOV](mailto:CDRAECS@PLACER.CA.GOV)  
AND FEDEX

Placer County  
Environmental Coordination Services – Community Development Resource Center  
Attn: Maywan Krach, Community Development Technician  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Re: Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Report for Northstar Mountain Master Plan (PEIR 20070565, State Clearinghouse# 2012112020).**

**Dear Ms. Krach:**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environment Impact Report (“EIR”) for the proposed Northstar Mountain Master Plan (“Project”). I am submitting this letter as the owner of 3081 Aspen Grove a condo in the Aspen Grove Owners Association (“Aspen Grove”). Aspen Grove is a 180-unit residential condominium project located down slope at the base of the Northstar Village in Placer County, California, adjacent to the Project area. I am also a member of the Northstar Property Owners Association (“NPOA”) as such many of my concerns apply to its property as well.

Aspen Grove is currently involved in ongoing litigation with the developers and owners of the Northstar Village in Placer County Superior Court. The litigation arises from the Village’s design, construction, operation, and maintenance of its storm water drainage infiltration retention basin, which altered the pre-existing flow of surface and subsurface waters on Aspen Grove’s property, causing continuing harm and damage to Aspen Grove.

On February 13 and 14, 2013, the Placer County Superior Court issued a Statement of Decision and Interlocutory Judgment in the retention basin litigation , concluding that “Based on the evidence, the Court finds that defendants’ actions in the construction, maintenance and operation of the infiltration basin as part of the existing water diversion system on the uphill property has resulted in continuing trespass and nuisance as to plaintiff’s adjoining real property.” The Statement of Decision made further findings, including that natural drainage of the development area was changed as part of the Northstar Village expansion project, and that the alteration of the natural drainage caused flooding and subsequent damage to Aspen Grove’s property.

Based on the Court’s findings, the Northstar Village is currently in violation of its existing Conditions of Approval (SUB-416/CUP-2938) and applicable County Codes and regulations.

44-1

## Letter 44 Continued

The Placer County Code expressly prohibits the processing or approval of any permits or other land use entitlements when there is a pending code violation related to the Project site. Specifically, County Code section 15.48.160 provides: "No building, septic, water, sewer, electrical permit, or any other permit shall be issued by the county to any person for any premises or portion thereof which is in violation of this article [grading, erosion and sediment control]." Similarly, Placer County Code section 17.58.040.C. provides that no application for approval of a use of land, building or structure or other permit under the County's zoning ordinance shall be processed or approved unless:

Neither the proposed site nor any building or land use thereon is being maintained in violation of the Subdivision Map Act, this chapter, the grading ordinance, or any condition of approval of an applicable land use entitlement, except where the application incorporates measures proposed by the applicant to correct the violation, and correction will occur before establishment of the new proposed use, or recordation of a final or parcel map in the case of a subdivision.

**44-2**

I am not sure what is more egregious the fact that Northstar has refused to take responsibility for the damages they have been found responsible for causing or the fact the county has refused to enforce its own codes and regulations and therefore enabling Northstar to continue the irresponsible behavior.

Given the ongoing violations, and direct and significant impacts from diverted water that will result from Project approval, processing of the Project application must be immediately halted, and no further work processed until the existing violations are remedied.

It is also my concern that the EIR study, like the case of Aspen Grove, will allow Northstar to make changes without proper study or testing to establish a baseline base. The county and the EIR has a responsibility to establish proper oversight of developers to insure the environment and neighboring property owners are not damaged by irresponsible organizations like Northstar has been with regard to Aspen Grove. The failure of the EIR to establish a proper baseline of drainage and groundwater flows, instead deferring this analysis to post-project approval is again a clue to the inability of the county to exercise proper oversight and enforcement of its own codes and standard.

**44-3**

The EIR discloses that Northstar currently uses 258 acre-feet or more than 84 million gallon of groundwater annually for snowmaking. Essentially, the Project proposes to pump an additional 205 acre-feet or almost 67 million gallons of groundwater a year from an outside basin (in addition to the 258 acre-feet already discharged onto the mountain), and discharge it onto an area where this water would not naturally fall. Yet, despite the artificial addition of 463 acre-feet or more than 150 million gallons of water to an outside drainage basin, the EIR fails to include any analysis of the potential drainage impacts associated with snowmaking. In the recent trial that found Northstar and other defendants guilty of diverting water onto Aspen Grove and causing damage to parking lots, buildings

**44-4**

## Letter 44 Continued

and killing tree, Northstar produce evidence that showed all the drainage from Mount Pluto goes through Aspen Grove.

By failing to include any analysis of the impacts of the addition of 205 acre-feet or almost 67 million gallons of water from an outside groundwater basin to a completely separate drainage basin, the EIR falls woefully short as an environmental full disclosure document. The EIR must be revised to include this vital information. I would also be very surprised if the county or Northstar could produce any evidence that any competent testing has ever been done to establish a baseline base for the 258 acre-feet or over 84 million gallons of water they claim they are currently using. I would guess there is very little oversight if any with regard to current water being used.

**44-4  
Cont.**

The EIR correctly notes that implementation of the Project will result in potentially significant impacts resulting from an increase in stormwater runoff, yet provides no real mitigation to reduce these impacts. Instead, the EIR impermissibly defers study and mitigation to some future date, requiring only that: (1) improvement plan submittals include a final drainage report ; (2) stormwater runoff be reduced to pre-project conditions through the installation of retention/detention facilities designed to the satisfaction of the Engineering and Surveying Division; and (3) the improvement plan approvals include a stormwater runoff monitoring program. I believe this is another example of the EIR being written to have the least amount of oversight and testing in an effort to expedite the project for the benefit of Northstar and the County and to the detriment of the environment and neighbors.

**44-5**

I can go on though the EIR with example after example.

Lack of feasible mitigation measures that can minimize the project's significant environmental effects.

Discrimination in zoning

Failure to analyze the impacts of equivalent uses under the proposed zoning text amendment.

Lack of analysis of the visual impacts to viewsheds, or identify feasible mitigation measures to mitigate impacts to any viewsheds.

The use of "hypothetical" traffic volumes based on winter counts conducted on a Squaw Valley Road.

The implausibly concludes that the Project will not generate any additional visitor traffic to Northstar, but rather, that the improvements are proposed to accommodate the recreational demands internal to Northstar.

**44-6**

**44-7**

The analysis of parking impacts is based on the circular logic that because inadequate parking will limit the number of trips to Northstar resulting from the expanded facilities to employees only, no new parking will be required

## Letter 44 Continued

When it failed to accurately describe the cumulative effect of greenhouse gas emissions on the local environment and failed to provide for adequately definite mitigation.

**44-8**

The fact that the County has supported Northstar improperly segmenting the Northstar Mountain Master Plan from the Forest Flyer Project.

**44-9**

These are examples that this EIR for the Northstar Master Plan is noting more than smoke and mirror that the County has presented for the benefit of Northstar.

Thank you again for your attention to our comments.

Respectfully,

Robert Thornton

Aspen Grove owner

### Letter 44: Robert Thornton, Resident

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 44-1**

The commenter states that the Aspen Grove property has been damaged due to drainage issues involving the placement of a retention pond associated with a past improvement and that the Aspen Grove Homeowners are involved in a lawsuit against the project applicant due to water flowing from uphill property onto Aspen Grove.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 1 regarding drainage concerns.

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 44-2**

The commenter cites County Code Sections 15.48.160 and 17.58.040C as prohibiting the processing of permit applications involving a project site that is subject to a code violation. The commenter further states that the County should not allow implementation of the proposed project before the applicant complies with a court order to remove a defective retention pond directly above the Aspen Grove condominiums.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 1 regarding drainage concerns.

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 44-3**

The commenter states that the Draft EIR fails to establish a proper baseline of drainage and groundwater flows and instead defers this analysis.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 1 regarding the adequacy of the DEIR hydrologic analysis and establishment of baseline conditions.

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 44-4**

The commenter states that the Draft EIR fails to include any analysis of the potential drainage impacts associated with snowmaking.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 1 regarding drainage issues and snowmaking.

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 44-5**

The commenter states that the Draft EIR defers drainage-related mitigation.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 1 regarding the adequacy of DEIR drainage mitigation measures 13-3a through 13-3c.

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 44-6**

The commenter states that the Draft EIR discriminates in zoning, fails to analyze the impacts of the proposed Zoning Text Amendment, and fails to analyze the impacts to visual resources.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 5 regarding concerns associated with the proposed Zoning Text Amendment. DEIR Figures 8-1 through 8-4 provide photos of existing viewsheds of Northstar and visual simulations of the visual alteration of the viewsheds from the proposed NMMP project- and

program-level components. DEIR Impact 8-2 provides a detailed analysis of the extent of impacts to these viewsheds. While implementation of mitigation measure 8-2 would assist in reducing the extent of the impact to viewsheds, the DEIR identified that alteration of views from State Route (SR) 89 would remain significant and unavoidable given the extent of alteration of the viewshed from the construction of the improvements associated with the Q, W, and lifts and ski trails. The commenter provides no countering analysis that the impact analysis is not adequate or how impacts to views from SR 89 could be mitigated with implementation of the proposed NMMP.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 44-7**

The commenter states that the traffic analysis in the Draft EIR is inadequate.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 2 regarding concerns associated with winter traffic counts, assumed traffic generated by the proposed NMMP, and parking.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 44-8**

The commenter states that the Draft EIR fails to accurately describe the cumulative effect of greenhouse gas emissions.

DEIR pages 16-15 through -25 provide a detailed analysis of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the proposed NMMP that consists of GHG emission estimates for construction and operation of key aspects of the proposed NMMP (see DEIR Tables 16-4, 16-5, and 16-6) and determines that the project's contribution to GHG emissions is cumulatively considerable. Mitigation measure 16-1 includes several measures that would reduce GHG emissions from the project and may ultimately require the purchase of GHG emission credits to offset project emissions to a less than cumulatively considerable level. As noted on DEIR page 16-23, the Climate Action Reserve (CAR) (as identified in mitigation measure 16-1) utilizes a standardized approach for the independent and rigorous verification of GHG emissions reductions reported by project developers into its offset registry. This standardized approach defines a verification process that promotes the relevance, completeness, consistency, accuracy, transparency, and conservativeness of emissions reductions data reported in the CAR. The CAR has approval from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to serve as an Offset Project Registry for the Compliance Offset Program under the State's Cap-and-Trade Program.

The commenter provides no analysis or information to counter GHG analysis in the DEIR.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 44-9**

The commenter states that the environmental effects of the proposed project and the Forest Flyer project need to be analyzed as one project, as they are both within the scope of the Northstar Mountain Master Plan.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 4 regarding project segmentation concerns.

## Letter 45

**Maywan Krach**

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**From:** Sylvia Toth <szilvit@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 08, 2014 4:29 PM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Cc:** peter Miller  
**Subject:** Northstar MP-DEIR

RE: Northstar Master Plan Draft EIR

Mr. Krach:

We are owners at Aspen Grove Condominiums at Northstar and have been for thirteen years. Unfortunately we are unable to attend the Public Hearing tomorrow, but wanted our comments to be on record.

We are opposed to consideration of this DEIR and the Master Plan until such time as Northstar/Vail is in compliance with all County codes and as such, past conditions of project approvals and mitigations measures. This should be resolved prior to moving forward on the proposed major projects in the Master Plan.

In addition the DEIR is inadequate since it does not specifically analyze project level impacts but relies on future studies as a mitigation. Specifically under Hydrology there is no analysis of additional impact on runoff of snowmaking and other project improvements. Any study to that effect should be done prior to certification of the DEIR and Aspen Gove Association as well as NPOA should have an opportunity to review the document. Given the current violation of Northstar any monitoring under Mitigation 13-3c should be done by an independent contractor hired by the County and paid for by the developer.

45-1

We are very concerned about any future development uphill from Aspen Grove given the possible continued negative impact upon our community.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sylvia G. Toth  
Zsolt G. Takacs  
1479 Nut Tree Lane,  
Sonoma, CA. 95476  
(707) 938-0224

Letter 45: Sylvia Toth & Zsolt Takacs, Residents

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 45-1**

The commenters state that the County should not allow implementation of the proposed project before the applicant resolves the issues surrounding drainage impacts, and further state that the Draft EIR is inadequate as it relies on deferred mitigation (mitigation measure 13-3c) to address potential hydrology-related impacts.

The commenters are referred to Master Response 1.

## Letter 46

### Maywan Krach

**From:** Pete Vall-Spinosa <petevall@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 07, 2014 2:44 PM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Cc:** Pete Vall-Spinosa; christine vall-spinosa  
**Subject:** Aspen Grove homeowner concerns about Vail requests

Maywan Krach  
 Community Development Technician  
 Environmental Coordination Services  
 Placer County Community Development Resource Agency

Sirs;

Vail has made a request on an expansion proposal. Their past actions have shown them to be dismissive of others concerns and worse, arrogant about damage they have caused.

Aspen Grove at Northstar has suffered very real and costly damage as a result of Vail Corporation's refusal to rectify mistakes they have committed.

Vail has cost each Aspen Grove homeowner over \$13,000 to date and rising. After the last court hearing which was favorable to Aspen Grove they immediately appealed the judges decision leading to still more costs, lost value to homeowners who may wish to sell to escape this nightmare, and no end in sight. This is corporate greed at its worse. Placer County loses in this as well. By not providing proper enforcement they participate in the devaluation of property and this only goes one way - like the water problem - downhill.

As someone who has spent years in community activities, specifically city government and its supportive commissions and agencies, I know full well the potential that government can wield in such extreme situations. You can place conditions on any activity that is damaging to the County's interests. In this case tax paying homeowners have as much at stake, if not more in a relative and personal sense, than a tax paying corporation such as Vail that has shown themselves to be poor neighbors and shoddy caretakers of the very place we all share. Worse, it would appear that the County has not provided the expected and needed oversight.

46-1

**We simply ask for conditions to be placed on Vail that require them to properly abide by Placer County ordinances and decisions. Until they have shown good faith effort and success in correcting PAST problems committed by their indifference, any decisions by the County for their FUTURE activities should be placed on hold. The County obviously does have a role in all of this as it their ordinances that everyone is expected to follow. This step is the only way to gain the attention of Vail to making an honest effort to settlement. It is the one fair way the County can show a vigorous and decent effort to support common taxpayers.**

Sincerely,

Pete and Christine Vall-Spinosa

Letter 46: Pete & Christine Vall-Spinosa, Residents

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 46-1**

The commenters state that there is a pending lawsuit against the proposed project applicant regarding a previous drainage issue that has caused damage to the Aspen Grove property. The commenters state that the County should not allow implementation of the proposed project before the applicant resolves this drainage situation.

The commenters are referred to Master Response 1.

## Letter 47

**Maywan Krach**

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**From:** chris vall <chrisvall4@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 09, 2014 2:03 PM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Subject:** Northstar Mountain Expansion Plan

To whom it may concern:

Our family has resided within Northstar since 1972. Of course, we have seen many changes and have enjoyed the many years our parents, children and grandchildren have come to love and enjoy this beautiful place. However, we have become quite dismayed and disturbed by the thoughtless character of Vail Resorts and the irresponsible and illegal actions they have taken by placing an uphill retention pond above Aspen Grove and Silver Strike that has caused millions of dollars in damages and legal fees. It would seem to me that the only alternative to further expansion at this time, would be that Vail would immediately and properly take care of the damages already incurred as a result of the retention pond. I fully oppose the Northstar Mountain Master Plan until our damaged property and Aspen Grove homeowner's have been assured that Vail Resorts will "fix" this devastating situation.

47-1

Christine H. Vall-Spinosa  
3120 Aspen Grove  
Truckee, CA 96161

Letter 47: Christine H. Vall-Spinosa, Resident

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 47-1**

The commenter states that the County should not allow implementation of the proposed project before the applicant resolves the issues surrounding ongoing drainage issues.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 1.

## Letter 48

Ellie Waller Tahoe Vista resident January 13, 2014  
Comments for the record on the Northstar Mountain Master Plan DEIR

Cumulative Impacts include but are not limited to: to Air Quality, Recreation, Water Quality to the Tahoe Basin are undeniable with traffic trips alone increasing due to increased proposed development at Northstar and visitors entering the Tahoe Basin, at the very least to Kings Beach. The FEIR must include documentation that TRPA concurs with policies listed for compliance for the Tahoe Basin portion of the Northstar Master.

48-1

Clarify in the FEIR that the Northstar Mountain Master Plan and any other future development related to the Northstar Master Plan is NOT requesting TRPA "Resort Recreation" zoning. A recently submitted application (and subsequent NOP yet to be released) by CREW (East/West Partners) will be exploring this TRPA specific and highly contentious zoning .

GOAL LU-5

COORDINATE THE REGULATION OF LAND USES WITHIN THE REGION WITH THE LAND USES SURROUNDING THE REGION.

To minimize the impacts on one another, the Tahoe Region and its surrounding communities should attempt to coordinate land use planning decisions. This goal is especially pertinent with respect to major land use decisions immediately adjacent to the Region which may have significant impacts on the Region and affect the ability of TRPA to attain environmental thresholds.

LU-5.2 WHERE NECESSARY FOR THE REALIZATION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN, THE AGENCY MAY ENGAGE IN COLLABORATIVE PLANNING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL JURISDICTIONS LOCATED OUTSIDE THE REGION, BUT CONTIGUOUS TO ITS BOUNDARIES. THE TRPA GOVERNING BOARD SHALL INITIATE ALL COLLABORATIVE PLANNING EFFORTS THAT ARE AUTHORIZED BY THIS POLICY.

48-2

IAP-1.4 ALL PROJECTS PROPOSED IN THE REGION OTHER THAN THOSE TO BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED UNDER THE SPECIAL PROVISIONS OF THE BI-STATE COMPACT RELATING TO GAMING SHALL OBTAIN THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENCY.

This policy is consistent with Article VI(b) of the Bi-State Compact which states: "No project other than those to be reviewed and approved under the special provisions of subdivisions (d), (e), (f) and (g) may be developed in the Region without obtaining the review and approval of the agency and no project may be approved unless it is found to comply with the Regional Plan and with the ordinances, rules and regulations enacted pursuant to subdivision (a) to effectuate that Plan." A project is defined by the Bi-State Compact as..."an activity undertaken by any person, including any public agency, if the activity may substantially affect the land, water, air, space or any other natural resources of the region." However, it is the intent of the TRPA within the limits of the Bi-State Compact to coordinate project review functions with local, state, and federal agencies.

Page 1 of 28

## Letter 48 Continued

Ellie Waller Tahoe Vista resident January 13, 2014  
Comments for the record on the Northstar Mountain Master Plan DEIR

**Page 1-11 Joint EIR/EIS and Review by Tahoe Regional Planning Agency** – The letter from the League to Save Lake Tahoe requests that the EIR address all potential impacts of the proposed project on lands designated Timber Production Zone (TPZ) and analyze project alternatives that would avoid such impacts. The letter also suggests that additional future projects are planned that are not included in the NMMP, some of which may be located within TRPA boundaries, and that these projects should be analyzed in the EIR and reviewed by TRPA. The letter from Ellie Waller further states that the proposed project includes lands within TRPA boundaries and would impact the environment of the Tahoe Basin and would therefore require preparation of a joint EIR/EIS and review by TRPA.

State in the FEIR where these concerns are addressed.

48-3

Page 2-2 Northstar Mountain Master Plan EIR  
**Program-Level Components**

**Page 2-2 Remote campsite** located in the Backside area to the west of Lookout Mountain that would offer a variety of summer and winter camping opportunities. Access to this site would be by van via the existing 900 road to the 705 road in the summer and by snowcat in the winter.

Add language that Prohibits use of the Fibreboard freeway for entrance to the campground location and all other locations (not including for maintenance) that can access the Fibreboard Freeway in the FEIR.

48-4

**Additional non-skiing recreation activities** that are centered in the mid-mountain area.

**Page 2-3 2.3.1 PRIMARY OBJECTIVES**

1) Maintain Northstar's competitiveness as a resort destination by upgrading existing services, amenities, and operations. This includes providing a better balance of skier amenities, improving lift technology, and increasing the variety and mix of recreational activities.

48-5

**2.3.2 GENERAL PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

16) Add or develop non-skiing recreation opportunities that are consistent with the overall management and use of the resort (i.e., proposed program-level campsites). Define what a non-skiing recreation opportunity is in the FEIR.

Explain in the FEIR why there is no mention of the Forest Flyer in the DEIR which was recently proposed under a Negative Declaration as a separate year-round non-skiing activity. Explain why Vail's Epic Discovery program isn't mentioned anywhere in the Northstar Master Plan DEIS. The Epic Discovery Program must be defined and analyzed in the FEIR if any of the Epic Discovery Program amusements are to be built. Using a Negative Declarations for each amenity does not capture cumulative impacts of all proposed amusements. Heavenly Mountain released an NOP for the Epic Discovery program at that resort which will require an EIR.

48-6

Page 2 of 28

## Letter 48 Continued

Ellie Waller Tahoe Vista resident January 13, 2014  
Comments for the record on the Northstar Mountain Master Plan DEIR

[http://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/Final HV Epic Discovery NOP NOI with Attach A web R1.pdf](http://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/Final_HV_Epic_Discovery_NOP_NOI_with_Attach_A_web_R1.pdf)  
NOP/NOI to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for TRPA and the Forest Service and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Lahontan for the Heavenly Mountain Resort (Heavenly) Epic Discovery Project

Article posted during Forest Flyer Negative Dec process  
<http://www.tahoedailytribune.com/northshore/7356978-113/forest-northstar-plan-amenity>

<http://news.vailresorts.com/corporate/vail+resorts+introduces+epic+discovery+a+summer+mountain+adventure+at+vail+mountain.htm>

Press release dated July 2012

Vail Mountain has submitted a proposal to the U.S. Forest Service that includes the above activities and vision for Epic Discovery. Following acceptance of the proposal, the agency will begin its comprehensive environmental review. Epic Discovery at Vail Mountain is the first installment of summer mountain adventure plans that Vail Resorts has for each of its seven world-class resorts. Plans for Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Keystone, Heavenly, Northstar and Kirkwood will be announced and submitted at later dates.

48-6  
Cont.

<http://www.vaildaily.com/article/20120719/NEWS/120719833>

And those benefits will be expanded to the company's other resorts in coming years, although to different degrees. Katz said Breckenridge is being considered for a comprehensive program, as is Heavenly, in California. The company's smaller resorts - including Beaver Creek, Northstar and Kirkwood - will probably see less-ambitious plans more suited to those resort brands.

Define in the FEIR what "less- ambitious" includes: Forest Flyer? Ziplines ? Skycycle? Jeep Excursion Tours? Provide a list of proposed amusement amenities.

**Page 2-24 Mitigation Measure 8-3: Design Skier Services/Relocated Cross-Country Ski Center Facilities and Castle Peak Parking Lot Transport Gondola Terminals to Blend with Natural and Resort Character**

Skier services, relocated cross-country ski center facilities, and the Castle Peak Parking Lot Transport Gondola shall be designed consistent with the Northstar-at-Tahoe Design Guidelines provided in Section IV (Community Design) of the Martis Valley Community Plan. This consists of site design requirements on roadways and parking as well as building materials. Improvements at the Summit Deck and Grille shall be designed consistent with TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapters 36 (Design Standards) and 37 (Height). Building plans and improvement plans for the project shall identify compliance with this measure. Add TRPA Scenic code references for compliance in the FEIR for this mitigation.

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## Letter 48 Continued

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Page 3-20 A snowmaking line is also proposed along the existing Challenger run adjacent to the ski area boundary on the Backside. A portion of this snowmaking line, near the top of the run and adjacent to the existing Summit Deck and Grille, is located within the Lake Tahoe Basin that is under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and would be subject to compliance with TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapters 33 (Grading and Construction), 60 (Water Quality), and 65 (Air Quality/Transportation) (**Figure 3-8**). . **Add TRPA Scenic code references for compliance in the FEIR in this paragraph.**

48-8

### **Page 3-28 Skier Service Site Improvements Existing Summit Deck and Grille Improvements**

The proposed improvements to the existing Summit Deck and Grille located at the top of Mt. Pluto would provide additional food service with seating and restrooms. The improvements would include an addition of **approximately 6,000 square feet** to the existing structure. Portions of the existing Summit Deck and Grille site and future proposed improvements are located within the Lake Tahoe Basin that is under TRPA jurisdiction and would be subject to compliance with TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapters 30 (Land Coverage), 33 (Grading and Construction), 36 (Design Standards), 37 (Height), 60 (Water Quality), and 65 (Air Quality/Transportation) (**Figure 3-8**). **This requires TRPA approval. Provide TRPA concurrence of compliance documentation and any other documentation from TRPA in the FEIR**

48-9

Page 3-29 **The proposed Summit Deck and Grille expansion would modernize and expand upon the skier services located at the top of Mt. Pluto**, a key location that serves much of the Northstar terrain. The proposed Backside warming hut would provide a new facility to accommodate the existing Backside skiers and proposed Sawtooth Ridge skiers, alleviating the need to ski back to the top of the mountain or mid-mountain, while assisting in reducing wait times and congestion at the Summit Deck and Grille, Big Springs Day Lodge, and Zephyr Lodge.

**Provide a depiction of the proposed Summit Deck and Grille expansion in the FEIR for visual reference for the public.**

48-10

Page 3-41 Zone C: Intensive Recreation Use Area (approximately 894 acres)  
Zone C contains numerous recreational trails and backcountry roads that are used for a variety of activities, including cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, mountain biking, and off-road vehicle driving. West Martis Creek flows through the Sawmill Flats reservoir in Zone C.

**Provide a list of non-skiing activities if they are proposed that are not included in the above i.e. Jeep excursion tours, ziplines, etc. ( Epic Discovery amusements ) in the FEIR and the associated environmental impacts that must be assessed.**

48-11

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Page 3-42 Zone D: Recreation Use/Habitat Transition Area (approximately 902 acres)  
Zone D is a recreational use and habitat transition area that provides a transition from the intensive recreational uses of Zones A, B, and C to the Zone E Habitat Conservation Area. **Zone D is separated into three subzones that differ in recreational uses** and habitats. Subzone D1 is the northern portion of Zone D and contains the western slopes of Lookout Mountain. Subzone D2 is the southwestern portion of Zone D and extends from Sawtooth Ridge to Schaffer Creek. Subzone D3 is the southeastern portion of Zone D, and like Subzone D2, it extends from Sawtooth Ridge to Schaffer Creek. **Provide a list of the recreational activities proposed for Zone D in the FEIR and the associated environmental impacts that must be assessed.**

48-12

### Heavenly Mountain Epic Discovery

I'm providing links to several sources that you should read in their entirety.

**Reported July 19, 2012 6:32 pm • By CATHERINE TSAI / The Associated Press**

[http://journalstar.com/ap/business/vail-plans-more-diverse-summer-patronage-under-federal-law/article\\_bb68e07a-ec93-5031-8bf4-5b5050a747a5.html](http://journalstar.com/ap/business/vail-plans-more-diverse-summer-patronage-under-federal-law/article_bb68e07a-ec93-5031-8bf4-5b5050a747a5.html)

Vail Resorts said it has submitted a proposal to the U.S. Forest Service -- called Epic Discovery -- for summer activities at Vail Mountain and plans to do the same for its Breckenridge, Keystone and Beaver Creek resorts in coming months. If approved, construction at Vail could begin in summer or fall 2013.

The Vail proposal is among the first in the country submitted under legislation signed into law last fall allowing for year-round recreation on developed U.S. Forest Service land already used by ski areas. The bill was pushed by Sen. Mark Udall, D-Colo.

48-13

Vail Resorts CEO Rob Katz said the summer activities should bring new people to the resort beyond the mostly white, more affluent group that typically goes skiing.

From the checklist : Plan a Breckenridge vacation October 2013

<http://blog.breckenridge.com/2013/10/08/checklist-plan-breckenridge-vacation/>

**Vail calls it a roller coaster !**

"Family vacation, college reunion trip, girls shred weekend: Who's coming with? Where you stay, the slopes you hit and what your après scene looks like varies by company. Breck serves up terrain for every level, loads of quality family time (think [on-mountain roller coaster](#) and kid's zone runs) and real mountain town nightlife"

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**Lawsuit over Vail Resorts' planned roller coaster -- or is it an alpine slide? By Alan Prendergast Fri., Oct. 4 2013 at 11:30 AM**

[http://blogs.westword.com/latestword/2013/10/vail\\_resorts\\_roller\\_coaster\\_alpine\\_slide\\_lawsuit.php](http://blogs.westword.com/latestword/2013/10/vail_resorts_roller_coaster_alpine_slide_lawsuit.php)

When you've dropped two or five or ten million on that second or third home in one of the more desirable Colorado mountain resorts, there are a few items that you take for granted will not be next door. Walmarts, trailer parks and rendering plants are probably high on the list. But so are roller coasters -- which is why hundreds of riled-up, deeply invested Beaver Creek homeowners announced the filing of a lawsuit against Vail Resorts this week, alleging a long string of broken promises and scheming behind proposed construction of what critics are calling "amusement park rides" at the base of the ski area.

"You can put lipstick on a pig, and it's still a pig," says Chuck Montera, spokesman for the Beaver Creek Property Owners Association, which represents more than 700 households. "You can see it a mile away, and their plan is to operate it year-round."



A larger view of the proposed "forest flyer."

**48-13  
Cont.**

## Letter 48 Continued

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Negotiations over the new attractions have been protracted and complex. But amusement parks aren't considered an acceptable use by the USFS, and homeowners felt betrayed when Vail Resorts announced it was proceeding with this particular project on land it already owned -- while carefully avoiding terminology such as "roller coaster," "amusement park" and "tourist trap."

"We don't know where this will go. Will there be more roller coasters? Will there be a Ferris wheel? Where will it stop?" said Barry Parker, vice-president of the homeowners association. "We are not against development. We are pro-Beaver Creek. We are pro-Colorado. We just want to protect and maintain the beauty of these very, very special outside environments."

### From the lawsuit

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/173180422/Beaver-Creek-Property-Owners-Association-lawsuit-against-Vail-Resorts-over-proposed-forest-flyer-alpine-coaster-at-the-base-of-the-ski-area-Filed-O>

14. The portion of Tract S where Vail Resorts sought to construct the alpine slide is designated as Open Space Recreation ("OSR") under the Beaver Creek PUD and is subject to a conservation easement.

15. The Associations, along with other neighboring associations, opposed Vail Resorts' efforts, which resulted in this litigation.

16. This litigation was "administrative closed" in 2008 in order for Vail Resorts to pursue approval from the United States Forest Service ("USFS") for an alpine slide, coaster or other similar gravity-driven activity (an "Alpine Slide/Coaster") to be located and operated on USFS property at the Beaver Creek ski area.

17. Vail Resorts never pursued such approval from the USFS.

18. Instead, Vail Resorts undertook plans to instead develop a larger, mountainside amusement complex in Beaver Creek that will include, at a minimum, an Alpine Slide/Coaster, a ropes challenge course, a summer tubing course, ticketing operations, a food and beverage facility and separate restroom facilities (the "Proposed Amusement Complex").

I commented extensively on the Vail Northstar proposed Forest Flyer. A 20-25 ft path must be cleared and is necessary for installation and operation of tracks which must be analyzed. Provide analysis of snow removal operations and snow clearing for operational affectivity. Provide a safety analysis of the Forest Flyer. Restrict operating hours to no later than 5:00p not sundown as requested in Negative Declaration. No night time (5:00p) should be allowed. Provide tree removal and vegetation removal

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48-13  
Cont.

## Letter 48 Continued

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counts and analysis. Provide wildlife disruption analysis. Provide SEZ and stream analysis.

Provide an air quality analysis for the tour excursion vehicle operations if this is proposed for Northstar as a non-skiing activity. How many vehicles will be in operation daily? Provide info on proposed operating hours. Provide analysis of the dirt maintenance road usage for the tour excursion vehicles. Will maintenance road need to be widened? If so, provide tree removal and vegetation removal counts and analysis.

**48-13  
Cont.**

Provide wildlife disruption analysis of all areas that will be widened or disrupted by non-skiing amenities proposed at Northstar.

Provide analysis of any trail widening required for any of the proposed non-skiing amenities which must include vegetation and tree removal counts.

**48-14**

Provide an economic analysis of more than one zip if this is proposed as non-skiing activities at Northstar. Why more than one?

Provide scenic analysis for Skycycle if proposed for Northstar.

Provide scenic analysis of all amenities that could impact Van Sickle State Park.

Provide detailed VMT analysis for the newly proposed summertime crowds that these amusements anticipate drawing people to the Northstar Vail property and to the impacts to the surrounding North Shore communities of Kings and Tahoe Vista as both communities have either commercial or recreational opportunities that will be used by the Northstar guests.

**48-15**

Will the Master Plan amendments be a separate process or combined with the EIS/EIS/EIR process and approval cycle? Are any Area Plan amendments required and will those amendments be a separate process or combined with the EIS/EIS/EIR process and approval cycle. If any separate amendments are proposed, ensure proper public noticing of these meetings.

**48-16**

This one of my favorite comments from the Breckenridge Peak 6 EIR that also incorporated a Forest Flyer.

"Our national forest is not an amusement park. The unique features of 'nature' should be preserved and promoted and the 'man-made' impact mitigated. I support many of the proposed resort expansions, but cannot support zipline tours or elevated rail flyers that exist primarily to provide an adrenaline rush (speed, height, etc.) to amuse or entertain visitors. These types of 'rides' are mechanical, commercial, amusement activities and do not further the goals of natural appreciation or environmental sensitivity. Neither are there location-dependent — they can be found anywhere in the U.S.

**48-17**

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Save our national forests. And promote the 'inherent' beauty and values that exists in nature and the "human-powered" recreational activities that will nurture our next generation earth stewards."

**48-17  
Cont.**

### Page 3-46 3.9 ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

A Placer County Zoning Text Amendment is proposed to allow for the orderly development and implementation of ski lift facilities and ski runs on Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) lands within existing ski resort boundaries (approximately defined by land ownership, trail maps, and ski area boundaries as of March 15, 2012) in Placer County. As proposed by the applicant allowing the implementation of ski lift facilities and ski runs would address the identified constraint within the TPZ at Northstar. Additionally, to address comments submitted during the NOP public scoping period that pertain to potential unforeseen impacts of a countywide Zoning Text Amendment to allow ski lift facilities in the TPZ, the applicant has revised the requested Amendment to exclude TPZ lands that exist within the Tahoe Basin.

Similar to the existing Placer County FOR (Forestry) zoning district, which allows ski lift facilities and ski runs as a conditionally permitted use, the applicant proposed to modify Section 17.16.010(D) (Allowable Land Uses and Permitted Requirements – Timberland Production District) of the Placer County Code to allow the following as a Minor Use Permit under "Recreation, Education, and Public Assembly Uses":

*Ski lift facilities and ski runs, outside the Lake Tahoe Basin, within land boundaries owned and/or operated by existing ski resorts as of March 15, 2012.*

**This is NOT a minor amendment to Section 17.16.010(D) This MUST be vetted by the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors as a separate text zoning amendment. The amendment potentially involves many acres inside and outside the basin. Remove from FEIR.**

**48-18**

To implement this proposed Zoning Text Amendment, the applicant is also requesting the following modification (the proposed additional language is underlined) to Section 17.04.030 (Definitions) of the Placer County Code as follows:

*"Ski lift facilities" and "ski runs" (land use) mean the use of ski lifts, ski runs, and trails. Ski lift facilities include powered conveyors for transporting skiers or sightseers up a mountainside, with terminals at each end and supporting towers along the route. Ski lifts can be chair lifts, surface lifts, gondolas, or cable cars. Ski runs include slopes intended for downhill skiing, and paths or trails for cross-country or Nordic skiing, and helicopter skiing runs. Ski facilities also include snow-making, helicopter skiing facilities, and related commercial facilities such as equipment rental and storage lockers, warming huts, restaurants and bars, and overnight lodging accommodations.*

*Within the TPZ, "ski lift facilities" and "ski runs" (land use) mean the use of ski lifts, ski runs, and trails within land boundaries, that, as of March 15, 2012, were owned and/or operated by existing ski resorts and which are not located within the Lake Tahoe Basin boundary. Ski lift facilities include powered conveyors for transporting skiers or sightseers up a mountainside, with terminals at each end and supporting towers along*

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*the route. Ski lifts can be chair lifts, surface lifts, gondolas, or cable cars. Ski runs include slopes intended for downhill skiing, and paths or trails for cross-country or Nordic skiing. Ski facilities also include snow-making and related noncommercial support facilities.*

As proposed, the amendment would only apply to existing ski resorts and within existing resort boundaries as of March 15, 2012, and outside the Lake Tahoe Basin boundary. The proposed language effectively limits its applicability to the existing ski resort boundaries within Northstar because Northstar is the only existing ski resort in Placer County that has TPZ lands within its current boundaries (**Figure 3-13**). This would occur as part of NMMP project-level components.

**This is NOT a minor amendment Section 17.04.030 This MUST be vetted by the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors as a separate text zoning amendment. The amendment potentially involves a lot of acres inside and outside the basin. Remove from FEIR.**

**48-18  
Cont.**

Page 3-54 Skier Service Site – Summit Deck and Grille Expansion (6,000 square feet) 2,933 cut cubic yards. **6,000 sf and 2,933 cubic yards of grading is not a small infrastructure change. Describe the details of the expansion of 6,000sf. Windows and glare could become a scenic factor- add TRPA Scenic code references for compliance in the FEIR for Skier Service Site and TRPA concurrence documentation.**

**48-19**

### **Page 4-2 Forest**

This designation is applied to mountainous areas of the plan area where the primary land uses relate to the growing and harvesting of timber and other forest products, **together with limited, low-intensity public and commercial recreational uses.** The Forest land use designation comprises 17,065 acres or approximately 67 percent of the total Martis Valley Community Plan area. Typical land uses allowed include commercial timber production operations and facilities; recreation uses such as skiing and skier services including parking, incidental camping, private, institutional and commercial campgrounds (but not recreational vehicle parks); and necessary public utility and safety facilities.

**Define and list actual low-intensity public and commercial recreational uses that are being proposed in the FEIR.**

**48-20**

### **Page 4-3 Forestry**

The Forestry zone is intended to designate portions of the mountainous areas of Placer County where the primary land uses will relate to the growing and harvesting of timber and other forest products, together with public and commercial recreational uses.

Subject to approval of a conditional use permit, uses such as ski lift facilities and ski runs (including the **related commercial facilities**) are allowed in the Forestry zone

**Define and list actual related commercial facilities proposed in the FEIR.**

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### Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Plan Area Statement 15 – North Star

The existing Summit Deck and Grille, existing ski trails, and proposed snowmaking facilities at Mt. Pluto are located in the Lake Tahoe Basin, which is under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) (Figure 3-8). This area is within Plan Area Statement 15 (North Star), which designates the area as Recreation and allows skiing facilities as a special use. Define in the FEIR if the TRPA Resort Recreation zoning is being proposed for use in the TRPA Plan Area Statement 15 or any other location in the Northstar Master Plan. This is a highly contentious zoning issue.

48-21

### Page 4-6 From TABLE 4-1 PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS - LAND USE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Several of the proposed project components would be located adjacent to US Forest Service (USFS) land along the southern boundary of the project area, including a skier service site and expansion of the existing Summit Deck and Grille.

48-22

List in the FEIR TRPA related codes based on the proposed snowmaking facilities at Mt. Pluto and proposed expansion of the Summit Deck and Grille.

### Page 4-8 TABLE 4-2 MARTIS VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – LAND USE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

The proposed NMMP would expand existing recreational facilities at Northstar. The project includes expansions of existing facilities as well as development of new amenities, all within the existing boundaries of Northstar.

48-23

Define and list in the FEIR the actual new recreational amenities proposed.

### Page 4-9 & 10 4.3 IMPACTS

#### 4.3.1 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and on Placer County standards, a project would have significant land use and agricultural resource impacts if it would:

- 3) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan or other County policies, plans, or regulations adopted for purposes of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects.

48-24

#### TRPA Code 62.4.3. Environmental Documents

Applicants for projects within disturbance zones shall submit with their applications appropriate environmental documentation prepared by a biologist that includes specific recommendations for avoiding significant adverse impacts to the special interest, threatened, endangered, or rare species. Provide the appropriate environmental documentation prepared by a biologist for public review in the FEIR as the maps showing one-mile buffer are clearly in the Tahoe basin.

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- 4) Result in the development of incompatible uses and/or the creation of land use conflicts.
- 7) Result in a substantial alteration of the present or planned land use of an area.
- 10) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.
- 11) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forestland (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)).
- 12) Result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to non-forest use.
- 13) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to nonagricultural use or conversion of forestland to non-forest use.

48-25

The Initial Study checklist determined that the proposed project would have no impact on several of the above items.

Provide impact analysis for the items listed that will have impact. Each must be addressed in the FEIR.

**Page 4-13 IMPACT 4.3:** Conflict with Any Applicable Habitat Conservation Plan  
The County has not adopted a habitat conservation plan or a natural community conservation plan. However, a specific habitat management plan has been prepared that covers all of Northstar California. The Northstar Habitat Management Plan (HMP) was completed in 2009 and has been instrumental in guiding the location and design of the proposed program-level mountain improvements (EDAW/AECOM 2009). The HMP provides specific resource management guidance for land use and development of the Northstar property. Additionally, the HMP serves as a planning tool to implement local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. The proposed project- and program-level improvements have been designed in accordance with the HMP (see Section 6.0, Biological Resources). Therefore, conflicts with an applicable habitat conservation plan are considered **less than significant**. Provide a Table in the FEIR showing compliance to the HMP by category,

48-26

The County should codify and adopt a Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan and not just rely on the Northstar HMP. Provide in the FEIR a map and proof that the Tahoe basin portion of the Northstar property does not affect the goshawk habitat and other protected wildlife species habitats. Provide documentation in the FEIR that TRPA concurs

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**Applicable TRPA code must be listed and adhered to if TRPA does not concur**  
**Code 62.4.1. Disturbance Zones**

Perching sites and nesting trees of goshawks, peregrines, eagles, and osprey as shown on the TRPA Regional Plan Overlay Maps shall not be physically disturbed in any manner nor shall the habitat in the disturbance zone be manipulated in any manner unless such manipulation is necessary to enhance the quality of the habitat. The threshold shall apply not only to the number of known population sites but also to the disturbance and influence zone buffers to sites found in the future.

**A.** The disturbance zone for goshawks is the 500 acres of best suitable habitat zones for wintering bald eagles are as shown on the TRPA maps.

**D.** The disturbance zone for nesting bald eagles is 0.5 mile radius around each nest.

**E.** The disturbance zone for golden eagles is 0.25 mile radius around each nest site.

**TRPA Code 62.4.2. Adverse Impacts**

Uses, projects, or activities outside existing urban areas and within the disturbance zone of special interest, threatened, endangered, or rare species shall not, directly or indirectly, significantly adversely affect the habitat or cause the displacement or extirpation of the population.

48-27

**TRPA 62.4.3. Environmental Documents**

Applicants for projects within disturbance zones shall submit with their applications appropriate environmental documentation prepared by a biologist that includes specific recommendations for avoiding significant adverse impacts to the special interest, threatened, endangered, or rare species. Provide the appropriate environmental documentation prepared by a biologist for public review.

**TRPA Code 62.4.4. Special Conditions**

Special conditions of project approval may be required to mitigate or avoid significant adverse impacts to special interest species listed by TRPA or the U.S. Forest Service for the Lake Tahoe Basin, or for threatened, endangered, and rare species.

**TRPA Code 62.4.5. Developed Parcels**

Subsections 62.4.1 through 62.4.3, inclusive, shall not apply to situations where special interest, threatened, endangered, or rare species choose to live in close proximity to existing developed parcels.

Page 4-13 Program-Level Components  
Castle Peak Parking Lot Transport Gondola

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Most of the construction activities would occur immediately adjacent to existing trails and ski runs. Excavation, tree removal, and other construction activities could result in some disruption of the spring/summer recreational uses such as hiking and mountain biking. During construction, areas adjacent to and in the vicinity of construction would be subject to noise and dust impacts associated with heavy equipment, worker vehicle trips, and materials movement. Thus, the proposed project would result in temporary land use conflicts, which could affect visitors and residents during construction. Each of the specific physical impacts related to dust, noise, health hazards, and traffic is discussed in the appropriate section of this DEIR. In the long term, implementation of the proposed project would alter existing land use conditions in the areas affected by the proposed NMMP components by placing recreational uses adjacent to areas developed with residential uses as well as in areas used for timber production. However, the proposed NMMP improvements would expand upon existing similar uses within the resort and would not be expected to result in any new long-term, ongoing land use conflicts.

**Adding recreational uses in residential areas must require environmental impact analysis of noise CNEL, VMT, etc. Provide impact analysis in the FEIR that will affect the residential areas.**

48-28  
Cont.

Page 5-1 5.0 POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT

This section analyzes the potential impacts of the proposed Northstar Mountain Master Plan (NMMP) on local population, housing, and employment characteristics. It describes the demographics of the region, reviews applicable General Plan and Martis Valley Community Plan provisions, and estimates anticipated direct and indirect employment growth.

**Provide a Table in the FEIR with a detailed breakdown of Northstar to date ( single-family homes, tourist accommodation units, etc.) Provide the proposed number of additional units by project that are approved but not built and by type of unit. Provide a Table showing VMT cumulative analysis of all projects built and proposed in the FEIR.**

48-29

Page 5-6 5.2.2 STATE

**State Housing Policies** State law requires each local government in California to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of its city or county. The housing element is one of the seven mandated elements of the general plan. State law requires local government plans to address the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community through their housing elements. The purpose of the housing element is to identify the community's housing needs, to state the community's goals and objectives with regard to housing production, rehabilitation, and conservation to meet those needs, and to define the policies and programs that the community will implement to achieve the stated goals and objectives. The Placer County Housing Element provides goals, policies, and implementation programs for the planning and development of housing throughout unincorporated Placer County. The Housing Element Background Report identifies the nature and extent of the county's housing needs in the unincorporated areas of the county, which in turn provides the basis for the County's response to those needs in the

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Housing Element Policy Document. In addition to identifying housing needs, the Background Report also presents information on the setting in which the needs occur, which provides a better understanding of the community and facilitates planning for housing. State law sets out a process for determining each local jurisdiction's fair share of regional housing needs, called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation. As a first step in the process, the California Department of Housing and Community Development assign each regional council of governments a required number of new housing units for that region, including affordable housing.

48-30  
Cont.

### Page 5-7 TABLE 5-9 PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT

The proposed NMMP is projected to increase employment at the resort by approximately 102 full-time equivalent employees in the winter season, 3 full-time equivalent employees in the summer, and 5 full-time equivalent employees year-round when fully developed (project- and program-level components). Provide a Table in the FEIR of all new non-skiing recreational amenities proposed to be built for winter, summer or year-round use and breakdown the number of employees required for each.

### TRPA Code 14.10.2. Exception

When portions of the area subject to a specific or master plan are outside the region, the foregoing findings shall apply only to the area within the region. When the project and activities proposed within the region, in combination with other projects and activities proposed in the specific or master plan outside the region, would prevent the attainment or maintenance of environmental thresholds, the finding set forth in 14.10.1.E shall not be made and the proposed specific or master plan shall not be approved. Provide documentation in the FEIR from TRPA that this does not apply to the Northstar Master Plan

48-31

### Articles on snow making and the need for additional utility upgrades for the record.

Margaret Moran [mmoran@sierrasun.com](mailto:mmoran@sierrasun.com) November 29, 2013  
<http://www.tahoedailytribune.com/newsletter/9107673-113/snow-tahoe-snowmaking-resorts>

### Snowmaking: Lake Tahoe's 'insurance policy'

Snowmaking on Squaw Valley's upper mountain. The practice has come in handy the past couple winters at Lake Tahoe, which saw little snow, and is coming in handy again this winter, which is off to a slow start.

Inside Squaw Valley's snowmaking building, with the resort's new fully-automated system.

48-32

## Letter 48 Continued

Ellie Waller Tahoe Vista resident January 13, 2014  
Comments for the record on the Northstar Mountain Master Plan DEIR

Early season snowmaking at Squaw Valley.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story originally appeared in the 2013-14 winter edition of Tahoe Magazine, which hit newsstands around the Truckee/Tahoe region on Thursday. The magazine is a joint publication of the Sierra Sun, North Lake Tahoe Bonanza, Tahoe Daily Tribune and Lake Tahoe Action. To view a digital version of the magazine, click [here](#).

TAHOE/TRUCKEE — When Mother Nature is stingy with the snow, Tahoe ski resorts can turn to their backup plan. Using water and compressed air, local resorts create their own snow-covered runs to ensure winter success.

"Snowmaking is a form of an insurance policy," explains Amelia Richmond, senior public relations manager for Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows.

It ensures that resorts can open in time for the holiday season — be it Thanksgiving or Christmas — fill in areas with subpar snow coverage and provide good skiing and riding until the end of the season.

"It's a guest service piece," said Jim Larmore, director of mountain operations for Northstar California. "It's a piece we provide our guests so they can make planned vacations and provide a better ski experience than if they just relied on Mother Nature's natural snow."

Yet to make snow, resorts still rely on Mother Nature — to a degree.

### THE 'ART AND SCIENCE' OF SNOWMAKING

To make snow, resorts need freezing temperatures and low relative humidity.

"The humidity is huge — probably the single biggest factor," said Dave Hahl, snowmaking and grooming manager of Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe.

He added that low humidity allows the atmosphere to be saturated with water to create "that much more snow." If humidity is high, however, the atmosphere is too saturated to produce significant amounts of snow.

Secondary snowmaking factors are winds and cloud-cover.

"When you're making snow in the Sierra, you've got to catch every window you can," said Jack Coughlin, slope maintenance manager for Diamond Peak. "I used to make snow back East, and back East, you know you can make snow four, five days a week.

"Here, when it's cold, you grab it, and then you're going to get the beautiful warm weather after that."

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Cont.**

## Letter 48 Continued

Ellie Waller Tahoe Vista resident January 13, 2014  
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When conditions are right, resorts pump water — stored in ponds, reservoirs or other sources — through pumphouses, up pipes running up the mountain to specific snow guns. Depending on the guns in a resort's fleet, compressed air must also be pumped to the gun.

Together — air and water — under the right conditions, form snow.

"You don't want to pick it up and squeeze it, and you've got slush coming out," explained Coughlin, who's looking for a hard snowball at the end of the process. "So you really have to pay attention to what you're doing."

Once made, the snow is left to cure, perking out some of the excess water, before groomers move and flatten the snow into a favorable skiing and riding surface.

"(Making snow) it's a science and an art," Hahl said. "... The science part of it, it's the technology — the technology improves like anything else. Yet it still takes the guy on the ground to get it right. You can't overestimate the human link."

### HOW SNOWMAKING SAVED WINTER BUSINESS

With two consecutive mild winters at Lake Tahoe, resorts have had to heavily rely on their snowmaking systems.

According to Squaw Valley's snowfall tracker, it snowed 183 inches at 6,200 feet and 326 inches at 8,200 feet in 2012-13. For 2011-12, it snowed 182.5 inches and 355 inches, respectively.

The average snowfall for the Lake Tahoe region is 430 inches.

"Two years ago when there was a complete lack of snow, we still did great business through the Christmas period with snowmaking," Hahl said. "... (People are) just realizing that even if there hasn't been many natural storms, they can still book a vacation and still come up and get good skiing."

Being a winter destination spot, resort success is closely tied to community success.

"Particularly in the lean years, if we didn't have snowmaking, people wouldn't be coming," Coughlin said. "You've got to have those resorts open. (For) the local business, the restaurants, it's devastating when you have a bad winter."

Yet the ability to make snow when Mother Nature fails to comes at a cost.

### COST OF DOING BUSINESS

"It's extremely expensive to make snow," Coughlin said. "... We're running up electric bills running our water pumps and running out air compressors."

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When asked how much it costs to make snow, the consensus was it varies, based on weather conditions and equipment.

In an effort to be more cost-efficient, Larmore said Northstar has been investing in lower energy-consuming guns.

“(They) allow us to make more snow with less energy, which is really the big story,” he said.

For the past two years, significant investments in Squaw’s and Alpine’s snowmaking systems have been made. In 2012, \$2.6 million was invested in Squaw’s system, with \$600,000 at Alpine, Richmond said. In 2013, a total of \$2 million was invested into both resorts’ systems.

These funds went to fully automating both resort systems, piping work at Squaw to allow water to flow up and down the mountain and the purchase of new, low-energy guns — all to increase the efficiency of the system.

“The game in snowmaking now is everybody’s got their systems at the size they more or less need,” Coughlin said. “Now, it’s how can we do it less expensively? Where can we find more energy-efficient ways to do it?”

Larmore said even though the money-saving aspect is important, it’s not the driving force behind updates to Northstar’s system.

Rather, as Richmond agrees, it’s all about the guest and the guest experience.

“At the end of the day, it gets you out on the mountain, and you’re able to pursue the sports that you love,” she said.

<http://www.laketahoenews.net/2013/12/expanding-n-shore-electric-lines-studied/>

### By Kathryn Reed

Five routes for a massive electrical line on the North Shore are being studied in the environmental documents that were released in November.

CalPeco – short for California Pacific Electric Company – wants to strengthen its ability to provide power to that area. CalPeco is the parent company of Liberty Utilities, the electric company for the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin, Truckee and Alpine County.

For Northstar to be able to grow it needs to be able to tap into more power. These upgrades would allow for the ski resort to grow as outlined in its [master plan](#).

### Page 3-69 From the Northstar Master Plan EIR

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### 3.11.8 ELECTRICITY

Liberty Utilities California Pacific Energy Company provides electric service to the Northstar resort community. Liberty serves the Northstar resort from a substation located near the intersection of SR 267 and Northstar Drive, near the Northstar maintenance yard and office buildings. Liberty would provide electrical service to the proposed project. Provide a Table in the FEIR of the current consumption needs Northstar uses versus the proposed Master Plan by Phase. Provide a Table in the FEIR showing categories: snowmaking, each new lift, residential, commercial, etc.

48-33  
Cont.

### Page 14-1 14.0 PUBLIC SERVICES

This section describes the public services that would be required to serve the proposed project. Public services include fire protection and emergency medical services, law enforcement, electrical, natural gas, and telecommunications service, cable television service, parks and recreation, water, wastewater, and energy use.

### 14.6 ELECTRICITY, NATURAL GAS, AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

#### 14.6.1 EXISTING SETTING

##### Electricity

##### *Liberty Utilities CalPeco*

Liberty Utilities CalPeco currently provides electric service to Northstar and serves the project study area from a substation in Truckee. This arrangement is sufficient to supply a small area of development, including Northstar and other Martis Valley development, provided the load is in close proximity to the development areas. Table 14.6-1 identifies 2012 electrical demand for the Northstar ski resort. As shown in the table, current electrical demand is the highest during the winter ski season associated with the operation of resort facilities, with ski lifts and snowmaking facilities being the largest users of power. Northstar Mountain Master Plan EIR November 2013 Page 14-29/30 DEIR

Define in the FEIR how the lines will be located in close proximity to the proposed development in the Master Plan-show on a Map. Define in FEIR "sufficient to supply a small area of development". Define the small area of development in the FEIR.

48-34

Page 14-30 Table 14.6-1 identifies 2012 electrical demand for the Northstar ski resort. As shown in the table, current electrical demand is the highest during the winter ski season associated with the operation of resort facilities, with ski lifts and snowmaking facilities being the largest users of power.

Define "highest demand" and include in FEIR. Define reliability needs for the Tahoe Basin versus resort demand on system and upgrade for reliability in the FEIR.

#### TABLE 14.6-1

#### 2012 NORTHSTAR RESORT ELECTRICAL DEMAND

##### Month Electrical Demand in Kilowatts

August 402,209  
September 360,858  
October 374,264

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November 2,563,742  
December 4,092,661  
January 3,172,365  
February 1,762,109  
March 1,474,373  
April 1,075,805  
May 309,991  
June 358,040  
July 397,272  
Total for 2012 **16,343,510**

Source: *Northstar California Resort 2013* November 2013 Page 14-30 DEIR

**TABLE 14.6-3  
MARTIS VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – ELECTRICITY,  
NATURAL GAS, AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE**

**Policies Consistency  
Determination Determination Analysis**

**Policy 6.A.2:** The County shall ensure through the development review process that adequate public facilities and services are available to serve new development. The County shall not approve new development where existing facilities are inadequate unless the following conditions are met: a. The applicant can demonstrate that all necessary public facilities will be installed or adequately financed (through fees or other means); and b. The facility improvements are consistent with applicable facility plans approved by the County or with agency plans where the County is a participant. Consistent There is currently adequate infrastructure to provide services for the proposed NMMP project- and program-level components.

Define in the FEIR how the County is going to "ensure" there are adequate services. The proposed CalPeco utility upgrade is contentious and may not be approved as documented and anticipated in the DEIR thus this renders the EIR inaccurate.

Define Placer County's versus Nevada County's responsibility to "ensure" services are available in the FEIR. The FEIR must define "responsibility to ensure".

48-34  
Cont.

**Page 14-33 14.6.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

**Standards of Significance**

Electrical, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities impacts are considered significant if implementation of the project results in the following (based on State CEQA Guidelines

Appendices F and G):

- 1) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered electricity, natural gas, or telephone facilities, need for new or physically altered electricity, natural gas, or telephone facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service and performance objectives.

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### Page 14-34 Methodology

Evaluation of potential impacts related to electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications service was based on consultation with utility service providers as well as evaluation of electrical demands of the project. The analysis below addresses both proposed NMMP project- and program-level components.

### Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**IMPACT 14.6.1:** Electrical, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications Service and Infrastructure Impacts Because the proposed project is located near existing developed land uses, electrical infrastructure exists in the project vicinity. Liberty Utilities CalPeco has indicated that infrastructure exists for overhead and underground electric distribution. **This infrastructure can be expanded and extended with the appropriate participation by the developer according to applicable CPUC rules.** It is currently anticipated that the proposed NMMP improvements would connect to existing electrical infrastructure and would not require new distribution facilities, upgrades to the Northstar substation or any other off-site improvements (e.g., proposed California Pacific Electric Company 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project). Joint trenches would be

excavated to accommodate the new utility lines (including the extension of natural gas and telecommunications facilities if needed for the NMMP), including electrical lines from the Northstar substation to the proposed NMMP components. These trenches would be located along seasonal spur roads and ski runs. **Because the utility lines would be located underground, no impacts on operations are expected.**

The proposed NMMP project- and program-level components would result in the following new electrical demand (see **Table 14.6-4**):

**TABLE 14.6-4**

#### ANNUAL NMMP ELECTRICAL DEMAND BY PROJECT COMPONENT

##### Project Component Electrical Demand in Kilowatts

Project-Level Components	
Detachable Lift J	642,082
Detachable Lift C	428,055
Fixed Grip Lifts V and W	856,110
Surface Tow Lift Z	9,310
Snowmaking for 83,500 linear feet	3,036,220
Backside Warming Hut/Skier Services	240,000
Summit Deck and Grille Improvements	138,000
Castle Peak Parking Lot Transport Gondola	1,070,137
Lift Q	214,022
Skier Services	184,000
Sawmill Lake Campground/Relocated Cross-Country Center/Skier Services	224,250
Backside Campground	20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,062,191</b>

Page 14-35 In addition to these measures, new buildings would be required to meet current to comply with Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations regarding energy

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Cont.

## Letter 48 Continued

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efficiency. While the proposed NMMP would increase electrical demands, it would not utilize energy in an inefficient or wasteful manner. This impact is **less than significant**.

Page 18-36 As noted in **Table 18-1**, there are currently **proposed plans to improve electrical distribution that would be designed to accommodate future growth of the region** (proposed California Pacific Electric Company 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project). Therefore, this impact would be **less than cumulatively considerable**

This states that Northstar is depending on this upgrade- define impact to Northstar Master Plan in the EIR if the CalPeco project is modified?

Stating "would not utilize energy in an inefficient or wasteful manner" does not analyze use consumption and impact on the system. The FEIR must define impact on the system. The FEIR must analyze the system that is in place to date versus the proposed upgrade as the upgrade is highly contentious and may not be approved as stated.

If the proposed CalPeco/Liberty Utilities upgrade is not completed, delayed or reduced in size- define in the FEIR define how it impacts the Northstar Master Plan proposed development.

The MV CP states (noted above) the developer can pay for upgrade. Request the CPUC or Liberty Utilities provide a cost breakdown to be included in the FEIR for the Northstar Master Plan proposed expansion (new lifts, more snow making equipment, residential development, commercial development, etc.) and also by Phase.

### Page 16-15 16.3.2 METHODOLOGY

The proposed project would result in a substantial increase of electricity consumption as a result of new ski lifts and snowmaking facilities. GHG emissions generated by - increased electricity consumption are projected based on anticipated energy consumption in kilowatthours provided by the project applicant. The increase of traffic over existing conditions as a result of the project was obtained from LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. (see **Appendix 9**).

Provide details in the FEIR for "substantial increase of electricity consumption". Provide a breakdown of snowmaking electrical consumption requirements and new ski lift electrical consumption requirements in a Table in the FEIR.

**Page 17-6 Traffic and Circulation:** The proposed project would not substantially contribute to anticipated deficient operations and significant impacts to SR 267 and Northstar Drive in year 2012 and 2032 conditions, no intersection or TRPA vehicle miles traveled impacts would occur. The proposed project would be required to provide fair-share funding to the ultimate improvements to the Northstar Drive/SR 267 intersection, Northstar Drive improvements and annual transit service funding. Alternative 1 would have no impact on traffic, as no new recreation facilities would be placed on the site. Therefore, impacts to traffic and circulation would be better under Alternative

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Cont.

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1 than under the proposed project.

Provide cumulative impacts analysis in the FEIR for VMT at the intersection of Hwy 267 and Hwy 28 signalized intersection. At a minimum, employees located in KB, Tahoe Vista and nearby towns will be driving from Tahoe to Northstar or taking Northstar provided shuttles or TART. A percentage of visitors will also seek lodging in Tahoe and not Northstar that will use that intersection.

**48-37  
Cont.**

### Page 18-1 18.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACT APPROACH

The cumulative setting for the proposed project includes all past, present, and probable future development as identified in the Placer County General Plan Update EIR, the Martis Valley Community Plan EIR, the Town of Truckee General Plan Update EIR, the Nevada County General Plan Update EIR, and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Regional Plan Update EIS. In addition, **Table 18-1** below provides the status of large-scale development projects in eastern Placer County, including Truckee. This list of projects was utilized in the development and analysis of the cumulative settings for the project. **Please note that this list is not intended to be an inclusive list of all projects in the region.**

I understand this table is not intended to include all projects in the basin but **the FEIR must include those projects less than 10 miles from Northstar or projects that use Hwy 267.**

Source information from CalPeco EIR released Dec 2013 and Placer County or TRPA approved projects

The cumulative analysis must include:

- 1) Approved Boulder Bay Project at Stateline, approx. 350 units
- 2) Proposed Martis West parcel which abuts the Northstar property, approx. 760 units,
- 3/4) Approved Tahoe Vista Timeshare project, approx. 39 units and TRPA approved 6731 Timeshare project, approx. 20 units (both to built Spring 2014)
- 5) Proposed Northstar Highlands: 50 townhomes, 10 single family lots, 386 condos, up to 147 commercial condos and 4,000 sf commercial floor space
- 6) Approved Cabin Creek Biomass Facility will use Hwy 267 for forest fuels removal and transportation- Construction 2014
- 7) Approved Kings Beach Core Improvement Project will use Hwy 267 Construction underway
- 8) Approved Martis Camp 663 lots on over 2,000 acres- private golf and ski club community. Partially built-out, lots available

**48-38**

Update statistics for the following for cumulative impacts:

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- 1) Joerger Ranch 70 acres mixed-use including industrial, office space, public facilities, and apartment uses – 318 dwelling units
- 2) Coldstream Specific 70,000 sf non-residential SF

Section 15130(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Cumulatively considerable, as defined in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)(3), means that the "incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects." State CEQA Guidelines Section 15355 defines a cumulative impact as two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

### Pages 8-19/20

#### Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Plan Area Statement 15 – North Star

The existing Summit Deck and Grille, existing ski trail, and proposed snowmaking facilities at Mt. Pluto are located in the Lake Tahoe Basin, which is under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) (**Figure 3-8**). This area is within Plan Area Statement 15 (North Star), which identifies that screening of views originating from the Lake Tahoe Basin should be provided for ski accessory uses (Special Policy 3).  
**Add Special Policy language to the FEIR as it is referenced above.**

**MITIGATION MEASURE 8-3** Design Skier Services/Relocated Cross-Country Ski Center Facilities and Castle Peak Parking Lot Transport Gondola Terminals to Blend with Natural and Resort Character Skier services, relocated cross-country ski center facilities, and the Castle Peak Parking Lot

Transport Gondola shall be designed consistent with the Northstar-at-Tahoe Design Guidelines provided in Section IV (Community Design) of the Martis Valley Community Plan. This consists of site design requirements on roadways and parking as well as building materials. Improvements at the Summit Deck and Grille shall be designed consistent with TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapters 36 (Design Standards) and 37 (Height). Building plans and improvement plans for the project shall identify compliance with this measure. **Add TRPA Scenic code references for compliance in the FEIR for this mitigation. Provide TRPA concurrence documentation in the FEIR.**

Page 18-6 Development in the cumulative setting area would be subject to the Northstar-at-Tahoe Design Guidelines provided in Section IV (Community Design) of the Martis Valley Community Plan as well as TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapters 36 (Design Standards) and 37 (Height). Compliance with these existing standards would reduce potential visual impacts. **Add TRPA Scenic code references for compliance in the FEIR for this paragraph.**

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Cont.**

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**Page 8-24 MITIGATION MEASURE 8-3** Design Skier Services/Relocated Cross-Country Ski Center Facilities and Castle Peak Parking Lot Transport Gondola Terminals to Blend with Natural and Resort Character Skier services, relocated cross-country ski center facilities, and the Castle Peak Parking Lot Transport Gondola shall be designed consistent with the Northstar-at-Tahoe Design Guidelines provided in Section IV (Community Design) of the Martis Valley Community Plan. This consists of site design requirements on roadways and parking as well as building materials. Improvements at the Summit Deck and Grille shall be designed consistent with TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapters 36 (Design Standards) and 37 (Height). Building plans and improvement plans for the project shall identify compliance with this measure. **Add TRPA Scenic code references for compliance in the FEIR for this mitigation. Provide TRPA documentation of concurrence.**

**48-39  
Cont.**

Habitat Management Plan EDAW Northstar-at-Tahoe™ February 13, 2009  
3-1 Existing Land Uses, Future Uses, and Target Habitat Conditions  
3 EXISTING LAND USES, FUTURE USES, AND TARGET  
HABITAT CONDITIONS

This chapter describes the regional setting of Northstar, and primary existing land uses, ongoing projects, and planned future land uses at Northstar-at-Tahoe™. The Land Use and Habitat Management Strategy (Chapter 4) would apply to some of these primary land uses. This chapter also describes existing conditions for target habitats. Allowable land uses at Northstar have been established by the Placer County General Plan (Placer County 1994), the Martis Valley Community Plan (Placer County 2003), and the Sierra Watch/MAPF Settlement Agreement. These plans represent the underlying documents that will guide the HMP implementation and future projects at Northstar. It should be noted that the Sierra Watch/MAPF Agreement is more restrictive than the allowable uses Placer County has established and the Agreement further limits land uses at Northstar (see Appendix A for Attachment M of the Agreement)

**Define in the FEIR how the Northstar Master Plan adheres to the Sierra Watch/MAPF agreement limitations. Provide documentation in the FEIR of compliance concurrence from Sierra Watch/MAPF.**

**48-40**

**Define in the FEIR how the Habitat Management Plan for Northstar adheres to the HMP limitations. Provide documentation in the FEIR of compliance concurrence.**

**Page 6-21? Define in the FEIR how the one-mile buffer (Figures 6.4, 6.5) that includes Tahoe Basin property does not have to meet TRPA rules and regulations for special species, Riparian and Aquatic Habitat. Provide TRPA concurrence documentation in the FEIR.**

**Define in the FEIR TRPA the approval process for areas in the Basin as this is not a joint document.**

**If TRPA code references are applicable to the One-mile buffer identified in the DEIR provide a list of applicable codes in the FEIR.**

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## Letter 48 Continued

Ellie Waller Tahoe Vista resident January 13, 2014  
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If TRPA finds one-mile buffer is indeed Tahoe basin the following code applies and must be analyzed in the FEIR

### EIR 6.2.4 TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency regulates activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Applicable policies and regulations include the Regional Plan and the Code of Ordinances.

#### TRPA Code 62.4.1. Disturbance Zones

Perching sites and nesting trees of goshawks, peregrines, eagles, and osprey as shown on the TRPA Regional Plan Overlay Maps shall not be physically disturbed in any manner nor shall the habitat in the disturbance zone be manipulated in any manner unless such manipulation is necessary to enhance the quality of the habitat. The threshold shall apply not only to the number of known population sites but also to the disturbance and influence zone buffers to sites found in the future.

A. The disturbance zone for goshawks is the 500 acres of best suitable habitat surrounding a population site, which shall include a 0.25-mile radius around each nest site.

B. The disturbance zone for osprey and peregrines is 0.25 mile radius around each nest site.

C. The disturbance zones for wintering bald eagles are as shown on the TRPA maps.

D. The disturbance zone for nesting bald eagles is 0.5 mile radius around each nest.

E. The disturbance zone for golden eagles is 0.25 mile radius around each nest site.

#### TRPA Code 62.4.2. Adverse Impacts

Uses, projects, or activities outside existing urban areas and within the disturbance zone of special interest, threatened, endangered, or rare species shall not, directly or indirectly, significantly adversely affect the habitat or cause the displacement or extirpation of the population.

Provide documentation in the EIR that the Northstar Master Plan is meeting their mandatory requirement for affordable housing. SawMill Heights has changed use so additional units must be built.

Payment of an in-lieu fee to fund employee housing development. This does not fulfill a requirement- should not be considered

However, because no timing has been specified for the development of the future employee housing sites, there could be a shortfall of employee housing if future phases are developed in advance of the future employee housing sites or without an employee housing component, resulting in a **potentially significant** impact.

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## Letter 48 Continued

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DEIR Page 5-10 November 2013

**15.65.220 Alternatives to the standard inclusionary housing component**  
<http://www.tahodailytribune.com/news/5624801-113/businessgeneral-local-leadstories-leadstoriesivg>

Brit Crezee, a spokeswoman for Ridge Reef, said Sawmill Heights will divide its three buildings by making one available for seasonal employees, and the others for long-term leases.

### Provision of On-Site Employee Housing

The project does not propose on-site employee housing. However, the proposed project could participate in the development of additional employee housing at the Sawmill Heights site that was programmatically approved as part of the Northstar Highlands project. The environmental effects of the development of this site were disclosed in the Northstar Highlands EIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2003012086) certified by Placer County in February 2004. Page 5-11

From CalPeco EIR:

### TRUCKEE RIVER OPERATING AGREEMENT

The Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA), which was approved on September 6, 2008, was developed to formalize, regulate, and monitor water rights and water use within the Tahoe Region, the Truckee River Watershed, and the final outflow areas of Pyramid Lake and the Carson River. This agreement was designed to improve the operational flexibility of Truckee River reservoirs and represents the culmination of 18 years of negotiation. Under the TROA, the interstate allocation caps the total groundwater pumping in California at 32,000 acre-feet per year (afy), less whatever surface water is diverted (surface water is currently limited to 10,000 afy) in the Truckee River Basin (USBR and DWR 2008: pp. 3-130).

The Northstar CSD is responsible for operation and maintenance of the water systems that serve the Northstar community in Placer County and serves approximately 1,500 residential and commercial customers. Northstar CSD obtains water from wells and mountain springs, and filters and treats the water at the Northstar Treatment Plant. As part of the water system, Northstar CSD operates and maintains a 180 acre foot reservoir, 16.2 miles of water line, 10 pressure reducing stations for four pressure zones, two 1,000,000 gallon water storage tanks, two 275,000 gallon storage tanks, and one 280,000 gallon storage tank.

Surface water and groundwater use is currently 18,700 afy in the California portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin and 10,370 afy in the Truckee River Basin (of which 2,800 acre-feet is surface water). The operations model assumes that, under TROA, California future water use will be 23,000 afy in the Lake Tahoe Basin and 22,700 afy (of which 4,300 acre-feet is surface water use) in the Truckee River Basin (USBR and DWR 2008: pp. 4-18). Under TROA, the interstate allocation caps the total groundwater

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Cont.**

**48-42**

## Letter 48 Continued

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pumping in California at 32,000 afy, less whatever surface water is diverted (surface water is currently limited to 10,000 afy) in the Truckee River Basin.  
**Provide a Table in the FEIR showing: Current water use and projected future use for residential, commercial, snow making, etc.**

**48-42  
Cont.**

### FAIR SHARE DISTRIBUTION OF RECREATION CAPACITY

The Threshold Standard for the Fair Share Distribution of Recreation Capacity Indicator Reporting Category is intended to ensure that a fair share of the region's outdoor recreation capacity is available to the general public. Three indicators provide a mechanism for evaluation of this threshold: cumulative accounts of recreation allocations (expressed as "people at one time," or PAOTs) when applicable; facility development for recreation projects that do not require PAOT allocations; and public acquisition of lands that support recreation purposes. Overall, the TRPA 2001, 2006, and 2011 threshold evaluation reports concluded that an appropriate level of outdoor recreation facility development that is controlled by the PAOT capacity system has been planned (TRPA 2002, 2007, 2012a). None of the alternatives would affect the region's fair share of outdoor recreation capacity available to the general public as the alternatives do not add or remove recreational facilities or increase demand for recreational opportunities. Therefore, the action alternatives would not affect the attainment this Threshold Standard. **Define in the FEIR Plan Area Statement 015 Northstar compliance with proposed Summer and Winter expansion. Clarify in the FEIR that the Northstar Master Plan and any other future development or expansion is NOT requesting TRPA "Resort Recreation" zoning. A recently submitted application( and subsequent NOP yet to be released) By CREW (East/West Partners) will be exploring this TRPA specific and highly contentious zoning.**

**48-43**

**TPZ amendment, at the very least, should be restricted to Northstar- not a Basin Wide amendment**

**48-44**

**Add to FEIR Permit conditions for all Habitat Master Plan consistency requirements and Design Practices as stated in the April 20, 2012 letter authored by Terrell Watt Planning Consultants.**

**48-45**

I incorporate all comments from the following organizations: North Tahoe Preservation Alliance, Friends of West Shore

**These documents are incorporated for the record.**

[http://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/TRPA Code of Ordinances.pdf](http://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/TRPA_Code_of_Ordinances.pdf)

<http://www.trpa.org/regional-plan/threshold-evaluation/>

<http://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/documentlibrary/commpians/martisvalleycp>

### Letter 48: Ellie Waller, Resident

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-1**

The commenter states that cumulative impacts of the project would include impacts to air quality, recreation, and water quality in the Lake Tahoe Basin from project traffic entering the basin. The commenter also states that the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) must be consulted regarding compliance with policies for the Lake Tahoe Basin associated with project components located in the basin.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 3 regarding concerns associated with impacts to the Lake Tahoe Basin and consistency with Lake Tahoe Basin policies and requirements.

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-2**

The commenter requests that the FEIR clarify that the NMMP and the proposed Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan/Martis West Area Plan are not requesting “Resort Recreation Zoning.” The commenter also references Regional Plan policies.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 3 regarding the extent of proposed NMMP features within the Lake Tahoe Basin (Summit Deck and Grille improvements and ski facility improvements – see **Figure 1-1** in this document). The project does not propose any zoning changes for the Summit Deck and Grille improvements and ski facility improvements in the basin, as they already exist and are consistent with TRPA Plan Area Statement 15 (North Star). As noted in Master Response 4, the proposed Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan/Martis West Area Plan is a separate and independent project from the NMMP and is not related to the Northstar ski resort. This project involves East-West Partners and Sierra Pacific Industries and is located on lands outside the ownership and management of the NMMP project applicant.

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-3**

The commenter asks how NOP comments submitted on the project were addressed in the DEIR.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 3 regarding application of the proposed Zoning Text Amendment on the Lake Tahoe Basin and the need for a joint EIR/EIS document. As noted in Master Response 4, the proposed Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan/Martis West Area Plan is a separate and independent project from the NMMP and is not related to the Northstar ski resort.

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-4**

The commenter requests that the proposed Backside Campsite Area and other project locations not be accessed by the Fiberboard freeway.

As specifically noted on DEIR page 3-33, Northstar would control the operation and access to this campsite (via van or snowcat) using existing the 900 road and 705 road. None of the proposed NMMP features propose to utilize the Fiberboard freeway, but rather would utilize and improve existing internal roadways on the mountain (see DEIR Figure 3-9).

#### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-5**

The commenter requests a definition of the non-skiing recreation opportunity for the proposed NMMP.

DEIR page 3-33 specifically identifies two proposed campground sites that would be placed in the bottom of the proposed C lift and in the Backside area of the mountain. Various non-skiing recreational uses currently occurring at the site include athletic events, ceremonies, and gatherings. These non-skiing recreational uses are consistent with the overall management and use of the resort and will continue to occur under the proposed NMMP.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-6**

The commenter asks why the approved Northstar Forest Flyer or Vail's Epic Discovery Program or other "amusement amenities" are not addressed in the DEIR.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 4 regarding the separation of the Northstar Forest Flyer and the proposed NMMP. The proposed Vail's Epic Discovery Program is being proposed at the Heavenly Valley ski resort and not at Northstar. The NMMP (which will be the basis of the Conditional Use Permit from Placer County) includes no provision for such uses at Northstar.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-7**

The commenter requests that mitigation measure 8-3 include a TRPA scenic code reference for compliance.

DEIR mitigation measure 8-3 already requires compliance with all applicable TRPA design and scenic requirements in the TRPA Code of Ordinances (Chapter 36 [Design Standards] and 37 [Height]) for improvements to the Summit Deck and Grille. No further changes to mitigation measure 8-3 are recommended.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-8**

The commenter requests that the DEIR include a TRPA scenic code reference for compliance.

The commenter is referred to Response to Comment 48-7.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-9**

The commenter states that improvements to the Summit Deck and Grille will require TRPA approval and concurrence.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 3 regarding TRPA involvement in the review and approval of the Summit Deck and Grille.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-10**

The commenter states that improvements to the Summit Deck and Grille will require TRPA approval and concurrence.

DEIR Figures 3-7 and 3-8 show the location of the existing Summit Deck and Grille and the extent of improvements within the Lake Tahoe Basin. The commenter is also referred to Master Response 3 and **Figure 1-1** regarding TRPA involvement in the review and approval of the Summit Deck and Grille.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-11**

The commenter requests a list of proposed non-skier activities beyond those identified on DEIR page 3-41 associated with Zone C (Northstar HMP).

The commenter is referred to Response to Comment 48-5.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-12**

The commenter requests a list of proposed recreation activities for Zone D (Northstar HMP).

The proposed NMMP would provide ski trail and facility improvements within Zone D.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-13**

The commenter requests additional analysis for the Northstar Forest Flyer.

As described in Master Response 4, the Northstar Forest Flyer is a separate and independent project from the proposed NMMP that was evaluated in a mitigated negative declaration and initially approved by the Placer County Planning Commission. The commenter is referred to the mitigated negative declaration for that project.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-14**

The commenter requests analysis for the following:

- Wildlife disruption impacts from proposed non-skier amenities, including trails.
- Economic impact of any proposed zip lines.
- Scenic analysis of Skycycle if proposed.
- Scenic analysis of Van Sickle State Park.

The wildlife impacts of the proposed campgrounds are addressed in DEIR Section 6.0 (Biological Resources) and are specifically noted under Impacts 6-2 and 6-6. The proposed NMMP does not propose any zip lines or a Skycycle. NMMP project- and program-level improvements would not be visible from Van Sickle State Park, which is located near the City of South Lake Tahoe.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-15**

The commenter requests a summer VMT analysis of the proposed project on the North Lake Tahoe area.

DEIR pages 9-40 and 18-28 identify NMMP project- and program-level component vehicle miles that are anticipated to travel into the Lake Tahoe Basin. Project-level components would generate 43 daily vehicle miles in the summer, while the entire NMMP (project- and program-level components) would generate 376 vehicle miles in the summer. The commenter is also referred to Master Response 2 and 3 regarding VMT impacts to the Lake Tahoe Basin.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-16**

The commenter asks how the Master Plan amendments would be processed in relation with the EIS/EIS/EIR process.

The proposed NMMP does not amend any existing master plan, and its approval does not require environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). TRPA will prepare its own environmental document for its actions that are limited to the existing ski facility and existing Summit Deck and Grille within the Lake Tahoe Basin. It is not expected that these improvements would trigger a TRPA EIS document.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-17**

The commenter makes a statement regarding the use of national forests.

The proposed NMMP does not involve any national forest lands.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-18**

The commenter requests that the proposed Zoning Text Amendment associated with TPZ be removed from consideration with the NMMP and expresses concerns regarding the impact to lands within and outside the Lake Tahoe Basin.

This comment is noted. The commenter is also referred to Master Response 5 regarding the proposed Zoning Text Amendment.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-19**

The commenter expresses concerns regarding the impact of the proposed expansion of the existing Summit Deck and Grille, specifically noting glare issues from windows.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 3 and **Figure 1-1** regarding TRPA involvement in the review and approval of the Summit Deck and Grille. DEIR mitigation measure 8-4b requires the use of nonreflective building materials on the exterior of all buildings and that building windows are coated with tinting materials to reduce glare and to minimize the visibility of interior lighting.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-20**

The commenter requests a list of public and commercial recreation uses that are being proposed.

DEIR Table 3-2 and pages 3-19 through -34 identify proposed recreation uses under the proposed NMMP.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-21**

The commenter asks if the proposed NMMP is proposing a zoning change for improvements within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The project does not propose any zoning changes for the Summit Deck and Grille improvements and ski facility improvements in the basin, as they already exist and are consistent with TRPA Plan Area Statement 15 (North Star).

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-22**

The commenter requests a list of applicable TRPA codes associated with proposed NMMP improvements within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The following provisions of the TRPA Code of Ordinances would apply to the improvement of existing ski facilities and the existing Summit Deck and Grille improvements:

- Chapter 33 (Grading and Construction)
- Chapter 36, Section 36.8 (Exterior Lighting Standards)
- Chapter 36 (Design Standards)
- Chapter 37 (Height)
- Chapter 60 (Water Quality)
- Chapter 65 (Air Quality/Transportation)

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-23**

The commenter requests a list of recreation amenities that are being proposed.

DEIR Table 3-2 and pages 3-19 through -34 identify proposed recreation uses under the proposed NMMP.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-24**

The commenter requests environmental documentation prepared by a biologist in relation to TRPA Code 64.4.3.

DEIR Section 6.0 (Biological Resources) and Appendix 3.3 (Northstar HMP) address project impacts to special-status species.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-25**

The commenter provides a list of land use, agricultural resource, and forestry resource impact issue areas that they request be addressed.

DEIR pages 4-9 through -14 address the issues identified by the commenter.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-26**

The commenter states that the County should adopt a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan and not rely on the Northstar HMP. The commenter also requests that impacts to goshawk habitat and other protected wildlife species habitats be addressed and that the conclusions be concurred by TRPA.

The commenter's opinion regarding habitat conservation planning for Northstar are noted. The Northstar HMP was reviewed and utilized by the County in the preparation of the DEIR in addressing impacts to northern goshawks as well as other special-status species and their habitats (see DEIR pages 6-51 through -75). The commenter is also referred to Master Response 3 regarding TRPA involvement.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-27**

The commenter states that applicable TRPA code provisions must be listed and adhered to if TRPA does not concur.

Impacts to goshawks and other raptors that could be impacted by the proposed NMMP are addressed on DEIR pages 6-51 through -75. The commenter is also referred to Master Response 3 regarding TRPA involvement.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-28**

The commenter states an environmental impact analysis is required of project uses that impact residential areas.

The DEIR addresses potential impacts to existing residential areas in the following sections:

- Land use compatibility issues in Section 4.0 (Land Use and Forestry Resources)
- Changes in visual character from public views in Section 8.0 (Visual Resources)
- Traffic operations, parking, alternative transportation, and safety in Section 9.0 (Traffic and Circulation)
- Construction and operation air quality, toxic air contaminants, and odors in Section 10.0 (Air Quality)
- Construction and operation noise and vibration impacts in Section 11.0 (Noise)
- Potential hazard exposure in Section 15.0 (Hazardous Materials and Hazards)

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-29**

The commenter requests a breakdown of residential units that exist and are approved in Northstar and that a table be provided addressing VMT from all development.

The proposed NMMP does not involve the development of any residential units, thus a breakdown of current development conditions within Northstar is not required for environmental impact analysis in the DEIR. DEIR Table 3-3 provides a summary of residential units approved in large-scale residential and lodging projects within Northstar as well as within Martis Camp. DEIR pages 9-40 and 18-28 identify NMMP project-level and program-level components vehicle miles that are anticipated to travel into the Lake Tahoe Basin.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-30**

The commenter requests a breakdown of all new non-skiing recreational amenities and a breakdown of employees.

DEIR page 3-40 identifies the following anticipated additional employment for the proposed NMMP:

### Project-Level Component Employment

- Additional full-time equivalent employees during the winter season: 65
- Additional year-round full-time equivalent employees: 4

### Program-Level Component Employment (in addition to Project-Level Components)

- Additional full-time equivalent employees during the winter season: 37
- Additional year-round full-time equivalent employees: 1
- Additional full-time equivalent employees during the summer season: 3

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-31**

The commenter asks whether TRPA Code 14.10.2 applies to the project and asks that evidence from TRPA be provided that it does not apply.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 3 regarding consideration of impacts to the Lake Tahoe Basin. As identified on DEIR page 10-23, long-term emissions associated with the proposed NMMP for project- and program-level components would be below TRPA air quality thresholds for stationary sources provided in TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapter 65.1 (Air Quality Control) and thus are not anticipated to result in significant air quality impacts in the Lake Tahoe Basin (this would include emissions from potential increases in non-peak day skier traffic as shown in Table 10-6). In addition to the TRPA Code of Ordinances provisions addressing air quality, the Regional Plan and California and Nevada Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load Programs include measures to address atmospheric deposition of air pollutants to Lake Tahoe.

DEIR Table 18-8 identifies that the proposed NMMP traffic would not alter traffic noise levels on State Route 267 and is not expected to result in new significant noise impacts in the Lake Tahoe Basin, as project traffic volumes entering the basin (67 daily trips in the winter and 33 daily trips; see DEIR Table 18-7) would not be substantial enough to increase traffic noise levels along SR 28.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-32**

The commenter provides information regarding snowmaking and states that Northstar will need to tap into more power for the project.

This comment is noted. DEIR pages 14-34 and -35 address the increased electrical demands of the proposed NMMP, including snowmaking.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-33**

The commenter requests information regarding current electrical demands versus the proposed NMMP by phase.

DEIR Table 14.6-1 identifies 2012 Northstar ski resort electrical demands by month, with a total 2012 demand of 16.3 megawatts. The NMMP does not propose “phases.” However, the electrical demand of the proposed NMMP is shown in DEIR Table 14.6-4 by project- and program-level component.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-34**

The commenter requests information on how the proposed NMMP would connect for electric service and also requests that the “highest demand” for electrical demand be identified, with reliability needs defined for the Lake Tahoe Basin versus resort demand and upgrades. The commenter also requests a definition of “small area of development” on DEIR page 14-29. Lastly, the commenter asks how the County will ensure adequate electric service given that the proposed CalPeco utility upgrade may not be approved.

The commenter specifically defines that the highest demand for electrical demand for the Northstar ski resort is associated with the winter months (see DEIR Table 14.6-1). It is anticipated that the proposed NMMP electrical demands would also be the highest during the winter months given that the majority of the NMMP project- and program-level components are ski facility improvement and terrain expansion. Improvements to provide this electrical service would involve the proposed NMMP improvements to connect to existing electrical infrastructure and would not require new distribution facilities, upgrades to the Northstar substation, or any other off-site improvements (i.e., does not require construction of the proposed California Pacific Electric Company 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project). Joint trenches would be excavated to accommodate the new utility lines (including the extension of natural gas and telecommunications facilities if needed for the NMMP), including electrical lines from the Northstar substation to the proposed NMMP components (see DEIR page 14-34). Liberty Utilities CalPeco has confirmed that adequate infrastructure exists to support the project. The commenter provides no information that counters these conclusions of adequate electrical facilities to serve the project.

The statement in the DEIR of “small area of development” on DEIR page 14-29 relates to the areas served in the Truckee area by Liberty Utilities CalPeco in relation to other service providers in the area, such as the Truckee-Donner Public Utility District.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-35**

The commenter states that the DEIR (page 18-36) is depending on the proposed California Pacific Electric Company 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project and the FEIR should address what happens if this project is not built. The commenter also questions the appropriateness of evaluating whether the project would utilize energy in an inefficient or wasteful manner. Lastly, the commenter requests cost information on providing electrical service for the project.

The commenter misinterprets the discussion on DEIR page 18-36. This discussion notes that the proposed California Pacific Electric Company 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project would improve cumulative setting conditions regarding electrical service. As identified on DEIR page 14-34, the proposed NMMP would not require any off-site improvements such as the proposed California Pacific Electric Company 625 and 650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project.

CEQA Guidelines Appendix F and Public Resources Code Section 21100(b)(3) require the consideration of whether a project could result in the utilization of energy in an inefficient or wasteful manner.

Given that the specific equipment design and associated energy demand of NMMP components have not been determined at this time, it is not possible to obtain cost information associated with electrical service. Economic issues are not considered significant effects on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15131).

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-36**

The commenter requests information regarding electrical demands versus the proposed NMMP.

The electrical demand of the proposed NMMP is shown in DEIR Table 14.6-4 by project- and program-level component.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-37**

The commenter requests a cumulative VMT analysis for the intersection of State Route 267 and State Route 28.

DEIR page 18-28 (Table 18-7) identifies NMMP project- and program-level component vehicle miles that are anticipated to travel into the Lake Tahoe Basin.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-38**

The commenter states that the cumulative impact analysis must include projects within 10 miles of the project and provides a list of projects to consider.

Each of the cumulative environmental issue areas addressed in Section 18.0 of the DEIR identify the geographic extent of the cumulative setting, as it varies with each environmental issue area. The commenter provides no rationale for a 10-mile radius for the geographic extent of the cumulative setting.

The following response is provided for the consideration of each project identified by the commenter:

- Boulder Bay Project – The cumulative effects of this development/growth in combination with the proposed NMMP were generally considered within the geographic extent of environmental issue areas including air quality, biological resources, and traffic (impacts to the intersection of SR 267 and SR 28) in Section 18.0 of the DEIR.
- Martis West – The cumulative effects of this development/growth in combination with the proposed NMMP were generally considered in the DEIR cumulative traffic analysis. As identified on DEIR pages 18-8 and -9, the cumulative traffic impact analysis for summer and winter conditions was based on assumed buildout of the Martis Valley Community Plan (which includes the 1,360 dwelling units and 6.6 acres of commercial uses proposed to be shifted and residential development reduced at the Martis West site), which overstates the extent of traffic generated from development under the proposed Martis West (Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan/Martis West Area Plan) project as part of the cumulative impact analysis.
- Tahoe Vista Timeshare Project – The cumulative effects of this development/growth in combination with the proposed NMMP were generally considered within the geographic extent of environmental issue areas including air quality, biological resources, and traffic (impacts to the intersection of SR 267 and SR 28) in Section 18.0 of the DEIR.
- Northstar Highlands – The cumulative effects of this approved (not proposed as identified by the commenter) development in combination with the proposed NMMP were considered within the geographic extent of all environmental issue areas in Section 18.0 of the DEIR, as well as in the project analysis provided in Sections 4.0 through 16.0 of the DEIR.
- Cabin Creek Biomass Facility (haul truck traffic) – As identified in Table 8-8 of the Placer County Cabin Creek Biomass Project Draft EIR, biomass haul truck traffic is anticipated to be limited to two daily trips and would not substantially contribute to cumulative traffic conditions in the project area.
- Kings Beach Core Improvement Project (construction traffic) – Construction traffic would not occur during the winter peak-hour periods and would not contribute to cumulative traffic impacts in the project area.
- Martis Camp – The cumulative effects of this approved development in combination with the proposed NMMP were considered within the geographic extent of all environmental issue areas in Section 18.0 of the DEIR. As specifically noted on DEIR page 18-1, the cumulative setting and impact analysis considered development identified in the Martis Valley Community Plan EIR, which includes the Martis Camp project.

- Joerger Ranch and Coldstream Specific Plan – The development associated with these projects is correctly identified in DEIR Table 18-1 and was assumed in the DEIR cumulative impact analysis. The commenter is incorrect in regard to the proposed development associated with Joerger Ranch based on review of the Town of Truckee Joerger Ranch Draft EIR (2013).

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-39**

The commenter requests that Special Policy 3 associated with Plan Area Statement 15 be provided, that TRPA scenic code references be added to the EIR and mitigation measure 8-3, and that TRPA concurrence be provided.

Special Policy 3 associated with Plan Area 15 states the following:

*Other accessory uses to ski areas, such as warming huts and eating and drinking establishments, should be serviced from outside the Basin. Also, such facilities, if constructed, should be screened from views originating from within the Basin.*

DEIR mitigation measure 8-3 already requires compliance with all applicable TRPA design and scenic requirements in the TRPA Code of Ordinances (Chapter 36 [Design Standards] and 37 [Height]) for improvements to the Summit Deck and Grille. No further changes to mitigation measure 8-3 are recommended. The commenter is referred to Master Response 3 regarding TRPA involvement.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-40**

The commenter requests the following information:

- How does the proposed NMMP meet Sierra Watch/MAPF agreement limitations (also requests documentation)?
- How does the Northstar HMP adhere to the HMP limitations?
- How does the DEIR address TRPA rules and regulations regarding special-status species and habitats (also requests TRPA concurrence)?
- Define the TRPA approval process for NMMP components within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

In March 2005, Trimont Land Company, the owner of Northstar-at-Tahoe at that time, and Northstar Mountain Properties, the developer of real estate at Northstar (hereinafter referred to collectively as “Northstar”), entered into an agreement with Sierra Watch and Mountain Area Preservation Foundation (MAPF). The agreement between the parties was established so that development at Northstar could move forward and would not be legally challenged by the groups if the development and resource protection and management are carried out in a manner that is consistent with the terms of the agreement. Section 3 of the agreement required Northstar to prepare a Habitat Management Plan that identifies land use and resource management zones for the project. Attachment M of the agreement summarizes the intent of the document (Appendix A of DEIR Appendix 3.3) and establishes three overall goals for land use and natural resources management at Northstar:

**Goal 1:** Maintain and/or enhance natural resources values of Northstar lands while allowing for current and planned future land uses in a manner that is compatible with those values.

**Goal 2:** Develop a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan that describes a natural resources management plan to accomplish the above goal.

**Goal 3:** Recognize Northstar's role and contribution to natural resources conservation and management in the Martis Valley region.

The Northstar HMP has been reviewed and accepted by Sierra Watch and MAPF. The HMP is included as an appendix to the DEIR, which must be certified by Placer County upon approval of the NMMP. In addition, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan requires project compliance with the HMP. Several of the mitigation measures specifically require adherence to the HMP and use of the document for guidance in the development of each phase of the project. These mitigation measures will also become conditions of project approval, should the NMMP be approved by Placer County.

DEIR Section 6.0 (Biological Resources) and Appendix 3.3 (Northstar HMP) address project impacts to special-status species and habitat, including species addressed by TRPA rules and regulations. As identified in DEIR Figures 6-1 through 6-5 and the impact analysis provided on DEIR pages 6-51 through -75, the proposed improvements to the existing ski facilities and the Summit Deck and Grille would not involve any direct impacts to special-status species or habitat regulated by TRPA. The commenter is referred to Master Response 3 regarding TRPA involvement.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-41**

The commenter requests documentation that the proposed NMMP would meet its affordable housing requirement and expresses the opinion that in-lieu fees are not adequate to address affordable housing.

DEIR pages 5-9 through -13 address project impacts on Placer County employee housing requirements. Implementation of mitigation measure 5-3 would mitigate the impact and would be required to be implemented for each component of the NMMP. Mitigation measure 5-3 includes the option for the payment of in-lieu fees, which are considered adequate by the County. The commenter provides no analysis demonstrating that in-lieu fees would not be adequate to address the impact.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-42**

The commenter requests information regarding current water use and projected water use.

DEIR pages 13-11 through -12 identify groundwater usage in Martis Valley and identifies that buildout of the Martis Valley area would utilize approximately 21,000 acre-feet annually, which is well within the average annual groundwater recharge range of 32,745 to 35,168 acre-feet annually. DEIR page 14-12 identifies water users and facilities associated with the Northstar Community Services District (water service provider to Northstar ski resort). The proposed NMMP at buildout would increase water supply demand from ski service improvements (8.62 acre-feet annually) and increased snowmaking (273 acre-feet annually on average; note that snowmaking water demand varies based on snow conditions during a given year). These additional water demands would be within the average annual groundwater recharge range noted above.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-43**

The commenter requests the following information:

- Define that the proposed NMMP would be in compliance with Plan Area Statement 15.
- Clarify that the proposed NMMP or any other expansion is not requesting Resort Recreation Zoning.

The project does not propose any zoning changes for the Summit Deck and Grille improvements and ski facility improvements in the basin, as they already exist and are consistent with TRPA Plan Area Statement 15 (North Star) (see DEIR page 4-11). The commenter is referred to Master Response 4 regarding the independence of the proposed NMMP to the proposed Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan/Martis West Area Plan.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-44**

The commenter states that the proposed Zoning Text Amendment associated with TRPA should be restricted to Northstar and not a Lake Tahoe Basin-wide amendment.

As identified in Master Response 5, the proposed Zoning Text Amendment would not apply to the Lake Tahoe Basin.

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 48-45**

The commenter requests that the permit conditions include all HMP consistency requirements and design practices as stated in the April 20, 2012, letter from Terrell Watt Planning Consultants.

This letter was not provided by the commenter and is not a comment on the Notice of Preparation or the DEIR. The commenter is referred to Response to Comment 48-40 regarding Sierra Watch and MAPF acceptance of the Northstar HMP, which was used to design and refine the proposed NMMP.

## Letter 49

**Maywan Krach**

**From:** David Welch <welchdavid@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 13, 2014 10:43 AM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Subject:** Comment on the Northstar Mountain Master Plan

January 13,

2014

To the Placer County Planning Commission:

Re: Northstar Mountain Master Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plan.

My name is David Welch and I am a full time resident at Northstar. I have been involved in planning issues in portions of the Sierra, especially Martis Valley, since 2000. Most often my concerns about planning issues relate to the preservation of open space and the protection of habitat, actual and potential, on larger parcels.

I have two brief observations in support of Vail's proposed Northstar Mountain Master Plan to share.

1. Some years ago Northstar committed to create a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) which seeks to guide future development on the mountain at Northstar in a manner which protects key habitat. To insure that the plan would be thorough management engaged EDAW to create the initial version of the plan. Further, the final plan was peer reviewed by Conservation Biology Institute (CBI). I believe that Vail values the conservation resources at Northstar and seeks to follow the HMP to that end.

49-1

As the current Northstar Mountain Master Plan (NMMP) has been developed, the proposed plan was reviewed by CBI which found that the plan is consistent with the HMP.

2. Over the past several years as the NMMP has been developed key members of Northstar's management team (e.g., Mr. Bill Rock, Mr. Andrew Strain, and Ms. Jen

49-2

## Letter 49 Continued

Mader) have made a number of presentations to the Northstar Property Owner Association's board and membership. Additionally, management has presented the plan in public meetings.

Most importantly, early in the process management determined to reconfigure the location of some elements of the plan to reduce the potential impact on property owners.

In consequence of the diligence shown in adhering to the HMP and in dealing directly with potential local concerns, as far as I know, there is no local opposition to the proposed plan.

My hope is these comments in support of the proposed plan will help in your review and consideration of the proposal.

Thank you for your attention.

David Welch

**49-2  
Cont**

Letter 49: David Welch, Resident

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 49-1**

The commenter states that the proposed project is consistent with the Habitat Management Plan developed by the applicant.

This comment is noted.

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 49-2**

The commenter states that as a result of the diligence shown in adhering to the Habitat Management Plan, the proposed project has not encountered local opposition.

This comment is noted.

## Letter 50

**Maywan Krach**

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**From:** Ron Wihlidal <ronwihlidal@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2014 10:33 AM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Subject:** Vail/Northstar Expansion

Maywan Krach  
Placer County Community Development Resource Agency  
Environmental Coordination Services  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603

I am writing to you to request that you take a moment to pause and closely consider the expansion that is taking place at Northstar at Tahoe in Truckee, CA. I am a condo owner at Aspen Grove in Northstar, and the expansion and growth that Vail Resorts have already implemented has and continues to take a huge toll on the existing properties and surroundings. In a sort of David vs Goliath fashion, Aspen Grove Condo Assn. is trying to fight back at the damage caused, and winning for now in the eyes of the court, but, because of the deep pockets of a company like Vail, may succumb to the appeals process that Vail has the resources to access, whereas residents and small property owners do not. I hope a letter like this isn't useless, and that someone in local government can respond to county property owners. Unless someone with authority, such as yourself, can request that Vail fix and repay the current offenses it is responsible for, before they are given permission to move forward with new projects. I urge you to tie in expansion at Northstar with amelioration of current lawsuits and damages done.

50-1

Thanks for your consideration,

Sincerely, Ron Wihlidal [-RonWihlidal@Hotmail.com](mailto:RonWihlidal@Hotmail.com)

Letter 50: Ron Wihlidal, Resident

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 50-1**

The commenter states that there is a pending lawsuit against the proposed project applicant regarding damage caused to the Aspen Grove property. The commenter states that the County should not allow implementation of the proposed project before the applicant resolves the issues surrounding this property damage.

The commenter is referred to Master Response 1.

## Letter 51

NORTHSTAR VENTURE PENTHOUSES, LLC

Maywan Krach

Placer County Community Development Resource Agency, Environmental Coordination Services

3091 County Center Drive

Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603

*Delivered by email cdraecs@placer.ca.gov*

Dear Ms. Maywan,

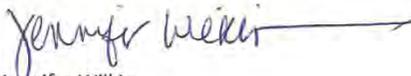
Placer County Officials, thank you for your continued thorough review of Northstar's proposed Mountain Master Plan. I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report and want to offer my support for the proposed plan.

There is no real estate associated with the proposed plan featuring exciting new ski terrain yet it appropriately contemplates already-approved, yet-to-be-built residential property that has mitigated traffic and parking impacts. The mountain master plan has it all: new terrain for a variety of expertise among the guests already coming to Northstar, and conservation. This plan isn't about adding new traffic to our roadways, or requiring massive amounts of new infrastructure. But about exciting new access to Sawtooth Range!

I have enjoyed the education I received on the Habitat Management Plan and how the mountain master plan will help implement such smart habitat and land use goals. I am proud of our community's collaborative efforts and only hope other ski areas and communities will be as thoughtful. Vail Resorts, and Booth Creek Ski Holdings before them, took their time – many, many years, in fact – to create a master plan that is appropriate, needed and will serve our community for the next 20 years, at least.

I want to add my appreciation that there will be no improvements in the Tahoe Basin. I also have reviewed the snowmaking plans and think they, too, are appropriate and the water needs are accounted for. Many thanks for your hard work and good luck!

Sincerely,



Jennifer Wilkin

Marketing Manager, Northstar Venture Penthouses, LLC

530-562-3114  
13031 Ritz-Carlton Highlands Court, Truckee, CA 96161

INSERT LETTER 51

51-1

Letter 51: Jennifer Wilkin, Marketing Manager, Northstar Venture Penthouses, LLC

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 51-1**

The commenter expresses support for the analysis in the Draft EIR.

This comment is noted.

## Letter 52

*Larry Young, Architect  
P.O. Box 34027  
Truckee, CA 96160*

530 550-8705 p/f

January 9, 2014

Planning Commission  
County of Placer  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603

sent via email to [cdraecs@placer.ca.gov](mailto:cdraecs@placer.ca.gov)

Re: Northstar Mountain Master Plan Draft EIR

Dear Commissioners:

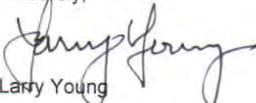
I am familiar with the proposed Northstar Mountain Master Plan, having attended presentations by the applicant and studied this plan. I am very familiar with the plan area, as I have skied, hiked, and mountain biked in the plan area and surrounding area for many years. I have read the Executive Summary and portions of the DEIR for this MMP. I know that this plan has been in the works for many years and I strongly believe that it has evolved during these years into a superb plan for improving the year-round experiences and recreational opportunities for visitors to and residents of the region.

The DEIR thoroughly identifies and evaluates the potential environmental impacts of implementing the MMP, including the impacts of alternatives to the proposed plan. The DEIR comprehensively identifies potential environmental impacts and proposes mitigation measures to assure these impacts are adequately mitigated. While a few environmental impacts may remain significant or potentially significant after mitigation, I believe these impacts are acceptable, particularly when considered with the far greater environmental benefits (e.g. implementation of goals of the Northstar Habitat Management Plan) that will be realized with development of the MMP.

Alternatives 2 and 3 are compromises that will result in not realizing the benefits that can be achieved by the proposed plan. Alternative 1, the status quo, offers no environmental benefits, or any other benefits, for that matter.

I support enhancing recreational opportunities at existing sites having the capacity to accommodate increased use in order to reduce development pressure and human impacts on undeveloped areas. The MMP is an excellent opportunity to do so. The DEIR more than adequately addresses the potential environmental impacts and related mitigation measures for implementation of the proposed Northstar Mountain Master Plan. I hope that you will find the DEIR adequate and accept it without delay. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Larry Young

52-1

Letter 52: Larry Young, Resident

**RESPONSE TO COMMENT 52-1**

The commenter expresses support for the analysis in the Draft EIR.

This comment is noted.

Letter AA



Placer County Community Development Resource Agency  
Attn: Maywan Krach  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603  
[cdraecs@placer.ca.gov](mailto:cdraecs@placer.ca.gov)

January 12, 2014

**Subject: Northstar Mountain Master Plan Amendment Draft Environment Impact Report (DEIR)**

Dear Mr. Krach:

The Friends of the West Shore appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Northstar Mountain Master Plan Amendment (NMMPA) Draft EIR. We also incorporate comments submitted by Ellie Waller, the North Tahoe Preservation Alliance, the North Tahoe Citizens Action Alliance/Dave McClure, the Friends of Lake Tahoe, and the Sierra Club.

The Friends of the West Shore (FOWS) works towards the preservation, protection and conservation of the West Shore, our watersheds, wildlife, and rural quality of life, for today and future generations. FOWS represents community interests from Tahoma to Tahoe City. We are concerned with the extent of proposed development along the West Shore, North Shore, and areas bordering the Lake Tahoe Basin (e.g. Northstar), and the cumulative impacts of these multiple projects on our communities. Cumulative impacts from these projects include increased Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the Basin, increased water and air pollution, noise, and other adverse impacts associated with increasing visitor and resident populations, both in the Basin and surrounding areas.

AA-1

Although we appreciate Placer County's inclusion of our comments from April 2013 (after the NOP deadline), the DEIR has failed to respond to a majority of the questions raised, and failed to assess the project's potential impacts to West Shore and the Tahoe Region at large. As our comments note, the DEIR underestimates, or completely fails to address many of the impacts to the Basin. Further, as requested by the League to Save Lake Tahoe (DEIR, p. 1-11), given the impacts within the Tahoe Basin, a combined EIR/EIS should be performed (with TRPA).

AA-2

Detailed comments are provided below. Please feel free to contact Jennifer Quashnick at [jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Susan Gearhart,  
*President,*  
Friends of the West Shore

Jennifer Quashnick  
*Conservation Consultant*  
Friends of the West Shore

Attachments: 4/8/2013  
1/6/2014  
1218/2013

FOWS Comments on Northstar Mountain Master Plan Amendment NOP  
FOWS Comments on CalPeco DEIS/DEIS/DEIR  
Excerpt from TRPA's December 2013 GB packet re: Martis Valley West Area Plan proposal

## Letter AA Continued

FOWS Comments on Northstar MMPA DEIR

1/12/14

### Impacts of Northstar visitor and residents traveling into the Basin:

As noted in our 4/8/13 comments, FOWS is especially concerned with the impacts that the proposed Project will create within the Tahoe Basin, and along the West Shore's already congested roadways.<sup>1</sup> The DEIR must adequately analyze the increased Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generated by increasing the resident and visitor populations of Northstar, as well as the associated air pollution, water pollution, noise (especially from increased traffic), and the impacts of the additional populations this will also bring to Tahoe. In addition, as VMT affects air and water quality in different ways in different seasons, VMT estimates must address the impacts in the summer and winter.

Unfortunately, the DEIR's brief 'summary' of potential employee trips in the Basin – the only noted vehicle-related 'impact' in the Basin – completely fails to address the impacts of visitors (both new and those staying longer), and residents drawn by new jobs. As noted in the DEIS on p. 3-34:

The proposed NMMP has been designed to accommodate both a day skier population and the destination-oriented guest. Given the approved bed-base and commercial venues, the proposed project is designed to extend the vacation experience for the destination visitor. The applicant anticipates that although the number of day skier parking spaces would not increase, there would be an increase in overall resort visitation given the new and approved but yet to be developed residential units. [Emphasis added]

AA-3

Visitors and residents throughout the Truckee and Martis Valley areas, and Northstar, are likely to drive within the Lake Tahoe Basin. Some portion of the increased population is apt to take a drive along S.R. 89 to Emerald Bay – one of the most photographed and visited places in the Tahoe Basin. This will add traffic, air and water pollution, and noise to the West Shore, and impact the public health and safety of residents and visitors to the West Shore (for example, increased congestion on S.R. 89's two-lane roadway, coupled with the lack of 'back-road' access between Tahoe City and South Shore, makes it difficult for emergency services to quickly travel along the highway). However, the DEIR completely ignores this impact.

Detailed comments follow related to the DEIR's inadequacies regarding the following impacts:

1. VMT and vehicle trips resulting from the project within the Tahoe Basin
  - a. Increased residents, including employees, will drive to Northstar as well as in and around the Basin;
  - b. Increased visitor trips and/or trip length will mean more vehicles within the Tahoe Basin
2. The air and water quality and noise impacts of increased VMT and vehicle trips
3. Growth-Inducing Impacts
4. Cumulative and Reasonably foreseeable impacts
5. Impacts to Recreational Capacity in the Basin

<sup>1</sup> **Impacts to the Lake Tahoe Basin** – The letter from the Friends of West Shore identifies that the EIR needs to address impacts of the project on increases in vehicle miles traveled into the Lake Tahoe Basin and the associated air quality, water quality, noise, and recreation facility impacts from the project as well as from growth inducement... (DEIR, p. 1-9)

## Letter AA Continued

FOWS Comments on Northstar MMPA DEIR

1/12/14

### 1. VMT and vehicle trips resulting from the proposed Project within the Tahoe Basin

#### a. Increased residents, including employees, will drive to Northstar as well as in and around the Basin;

Our April 2013 comments requested the following: *“The DEIR must sufficiently analyze the increased visitation that will occur along the State Route 89 route (from Truckee to Tahoe City) and along the Highway 267 route (Northstar to Kings Beach). Many visitors to Northstar, especially those with second homes or staying overnight, are likely to take a drive to – and often around – Lake Tahoe. Further, the DEIR/S must analyze the additional growth that Northstar’s expansion may bring to the area in general, including surrounding communities like Truckee, and the increased VMT and other impacts that will result in the Lake Tahoe Basin and specifically along West Shore and Tahoe City communities.”*

However, the DEIR’s only ‘analysis’ of VMT and vehicle trips in the Basin appears to be focused on anticipated employees (e.g. DEIR, p. 18-28), thereby ignoring any trips made by the project’s increases in visitor numbers, visitation lengths (as visitors stay in the area longer [see below], they are more likely to spend time in the Basin), and increased residents (including residents drawn to the area by the project), and the driving that will be done by the new employees living both within and near the Tahoe Basin. Employees will do more than just drive between work and home; they will live in Tahoe’s communities, drive around the area, and visit other locations within the Basin.

AA-4

#### IMPACT 9.3: Increase Vehicle Miles Traveled in the Tahoe Basin

The effect of the proposed project-level improvements on winter and summer daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the Tahoe Basin is dependent on the number of trips made to/from the basin and the length of these vehicle trips. **Table 9-11** presents the VMT analysis. The increase in daily trips made to/from the basin (points beyond Brockway Summit) as a result of project-level improvements is approximately 36 one-way trips over the course of a busy winter day and 5 trips on a busy summer day. The VMT generated by these trips is estimated by multiplying the daily trips by the average trip length. The estimated origins/destinations within the basin for trips made by the additional Northstar California employees is shown in **Table 9-11**. The highest portion of employee trips (about 40 percent) is expected to be made to/from the Kings Beach/Crystal Bay area. Applying the trip distribution pattern to the total daily trips yields the number of trips made to each area within the basin. The average trip length between Brockway Summit and each origin/destination point in the basin is shown in the lower middle column of the table. The weighted average trip length for all project trips on basin roadways is calculated to be approximately 8.1 miles. Multiplying the trip lengths by the number of trips yields the daily VMT shown in the lower right portion of the table. (DEIR, p. 9-40)

As indicated, the project-level development is estimated to increase daily VMT by approximately 296 over the course of a winter day and 43 over the course of a summer day. In comparison with TRPA’s 2011 estimate of 2,036,642 existing VMT on a summer day in the Tahoe Basin, the increase in region-wide VMT resulting from the project-level development is negligible and would not exceed the TRPA VMT threshold. Note that the TRPA’s VMT estimate pertains to an “annual peak day,” which typically occurs during August. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**. (DEIR, p. 9-41)

We reiterate our previous questions. The FEIR must adequately consider the impacts of the proposed project on the West Shore and greater Lake Tahoe Basin.

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## Letter AA Continued

FOWS Comments on Northstar MMPA DEIR

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### **b. Increased visitor trips and/or trip length will mean more vehicles within the Tahoe Basin**

As the DEIR notes, the project is designed to extend the stay of visitors. This will leave visitors more time to visit nearby areas, such as taking a drive to Emerald Bay down the West Shore, or driving the loop around Tahoe City to Kings Beach and back. This will result in increased VMT and associated impacts in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and along the West Shore. The DEIR must analyze the potential impacts associated with increasing visitors' stay at Northstar.

#### **3.4.3 PROJECT VISITATION AND PARKING ACCOMMODATIONS**

The proposed NMMP has been designed to accommodate both a day skier population and the destination-oriented guest. Given the approved bed-base and commercial venues, the proposed project is designed to extend the vacation experience for the destination visitor. The applicant anticipates that although the number of day skier parking spaces would not increase, there would be an increase in overall resort visitation given the new and approved but yet to be developed residential units. **Table 3-3** summarizes approved development projects in Northstar. (DEIR, p. 3-34). [Emphasis added].

The FEIR must analyze the increase in the number of visitors to the area, and the increased duration of each visit (and the activities visitors are likely to undertake) associated with the project.

## **2. The air and water quality and noise impacts of increase Vehicle Trips**

Once an adequate analysis of the vehicle impacts to the Basin has been completed, the impacts to air and water quality and noise along the West Shore and within the Lake Tahoe Basin must be analyzed in the FEIR.

#### Air Quality:

As the Placer County portion of the Lake Tahoe Air Basin is currently designated "nonattainment-transitional" for ozone and nonattainment for PM10 by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the DEIR notes the Lake Tahoe Air Basin is more sensitive to pollution (p. 10-1 and 10-2), the FEIS must adequately analyze the impacts of the project, including the induced in-Basin vehicle use. Further, the analysis must address the immediate impacts of construction and the longer term impacts within the LTAB; simply comparing estimated air emissions 20 years out (as done by the TRPA in their Regional Plan Update EIR/S), fails to address the impacts of the additional pollution over the next 19 years, and therefore fails to analyze the impacts to human health over the next 19 years.

The conclusion is that the air quality impacts will be significant and unavoidable. The FEIR must be examined to what extent these impacts be within the Tahoe Basin.<sup>2</sup> Further,

<sup>2</sup> Therefore, even with feasible mitigation measures, the proposed project's construction emissions incremental contribution to regional criteria pollutant emissions is considered **cumulatively considerable**  
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AA-4  
cont

AA-5

## Letter AA Continued

FOWS Comments on Northstar MMPA DEIR

1/12/14

what localized air impacts may result in North and West Shore areas, especially during inversions?

AA-5  
cont

Water Quality:

VMT impacts Lake Tahoe's water quality by both contributing to stormwater runoff and increasing emissions into the air, which then deposit on Lake Tahoe and contribute to degraded mid-lake clarity water quality conditions (noted in the multitude of Lake Tahoe TMDL documents<sup>3</sup>). In fact, over half of the nitrogen impacting Lake Tahoe is estimated to come from NO<sub>x</sub> emitted in the Lake Tahoe Air Basin. The TMDL also notes the significance of stormwater runoff from paved surfaces, including roadways, on water quality. The fine particulates, which have the greatest negative impact on mid-lake clarity, primarily come from urban stormwater runoff, which includes paved roadway surfaces. A large source of fine particles on the roadway includes road sand and salt applications - as more vehicles drive on the roadways, their wheels grind up the particles into smaller sizes that are more easily carried into the Lake (and the smaller they are, the greater the impact on clarity).

AA-6

Further, after a myriad of research studies and documents (as well as simple visual observations around the Lake's shoreline) indicated significant degradation of nearshore areas, significant resources have been spent analyzing the degrading conditions along Tahoe's shoreline (the "nearshore"). In fact, TRPA adopted a new threshold standard for nearshore water quality (December 2012 Regional Plan Update). The nutrients phosphorous and nitrogen both lead to increased algae growth in the nearshore (TERC<sup>4</sup>). As a result, vehicles impact water quality both through increasing the particulates and nutrients in stormwater runoff entering Lake Tahoe, and emitting these pollutants, where they eventually deposit to the Lake (or on the land where they can later be washed into the Lake). Although mid-lake clarity is regulated through pollutant loads entering the Lake on a region-wide basis, the impacts of location to nearshore are especially important. As noted by TERC, greater nearshore algae growth (attached to rocks and other underwater features) was found in the more urbanized areas including Tahoe City.

The FEIR must analyze the impacts to both mid-lake and nearshore water quality from the increased vehicle trips the project will generate in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Noise:

More traffic will mean more noise in the Basin. These impacts must be analyzed in the FEIR.

AA-7

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and a **significant and unavoidable** impact. No feasible mitigation is available to completely offset this impact. (DEIR, p. 18-30).

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahtontan/water\\_issues/programs/tmdl/lake\\_tahoe/index.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahtontan/water_issues/programs/tmdl/lake_tahoe/index.shtml)

<sup>4</sup> <http://terc.ucdavis.edu/stateofthelake/StateOfTheLake2013.pdf>

## Letter AA Continued

FOWS Comments on Northstar MMPA DEIR

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### 3. Growth-Inducing Impacts

#### 18.2.3 GROWTH EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

As described in Section 3.0, Project Description, the proposed project would consist of ski recreational improvements to the existing Northstar ski resort to improve the recreational opportunities at Northstar. Infrastructure improvements associated with the proposed NMMP are limited to supporting new ski lifts, snowmaking, skier service facilities, seasonal spur road improvements, and campgrounds on the mountain. The project would generate up to 102 fulltime equivalent jobs during the winter season, 3 full-time equivalent jobs during the summer season, and 5 full-time equivalent jobs year-round. The project's cumulative impacts could be in addition to the environmental effects of growth in the region. The specific environmental effects resulting from the proposed expansion of recreational opportunities and employment at Northstar are discussed in the environmental issue areas in Sections 4.0 through 16.0 of this DEIR. (DEIR, p. 18-38) [Emphasis added].

#### IMPACT 5.2: Induce Population Growth

The proposed project consists of the construction and operation of various improvements to the Northstar California resort. No residential uses would be constructed as a part of the project. The proposed NMMP is projected to increase employment at the resort by approximately 102 fulltime equivalent employees in the winter season, 3 full-time equivalent employees in the summer, and 5 full-time equivalent employees year-round when fully developed (project- and programlevel components). Full project buildout is not expected to occur for 20 years. Therefore, the anticipated increases in employment would occur slowly over this period as improvements are completed. For these reasons, the proposed project would not be considered a significant new employment center in the region. Further, given the large labor force within the county and the high unemployment rate, it is anticipated that these positions would likely be filled by existing workers in the area. Development of the project would not remove any barriers to development of the surrounding area or result in the construction of new roadways or infrastructure that could indirectly result in additional development or associated population growth. Therefore, the proposed project would not be expected to result in any population growth, either directly or indirectly. This impact is considered **less than significant.** (DEIR, p. 5-9). [Emphasis added].

AA-8

Although the proposed Project claims no expansions impacting the Lake Tahoe Basin, this does not appear to be supported by the facts. First, the proposed Project relies on the CalPeco Utility Project (comments attached), which will create extensive environmental and economic impacts within the entire Lake Tahoe Basin, and especially the North Shore (see attached 1/7/14 Comments on the CalPeco Draft EIS/EIS/EIR by FOWS).

As shown in **Table 16-7**, Liberty Utilities CalPeco delivered 6,433,570,000 kilowatthours (kWh) over the course of one year, of which 20 percent was supplied from renewable energy sources. As noted under **Table 16-6**, full implementation of both project- and program-level components would result in an increase in electricity consumption of 7,062,191 kilowatt-hours per year. Adding this total to the amount Liberty Utilities CalPeco delivered in 2012 (6,433,570,000 kWh) would equal 6,440,632,191 kWh. Such an immediate addition of energy consumption would reduce Liberty Utilities CalPeco's current renewable energy mix percentage to 19.9 percent. However, such a scenario is not likely, if not impossible, since the project-level components alone would take at least 10 years to construct. (DEIR, p. 16-24). [Emphasis added].

#### Electricity, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications Services

As described in Section 14.0, Public Services, there are infrastructure facilities that can accommodate the proposed NMMP as well as regional development. As noted in **Table 18-1**, there are currently proposed plans to improve electrical distribution that would be designed to accommodate future growth of the region (proposed California Pacific Electric Company 625 and

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## Letter A Continued

FOWS Comments on Northstar MMPA DEIR

1/12/14

650 Electrical Line Upgrade Project). Therefore, this impact would be **less than cumulatively considerable**. (DEIR, p. 18-36). [Emphasis added].

We are concerned with the failure to examine the impacts of this growth, by the proposed project as well as the CalPeco project, which concludes no growth-inducing impacts because it is merely a power line upgrade, not an expansion of the area served:

Although the focus of the project is to improve the reliability of the system by allowing individual lines to carry more power, a bi-product of this effort is the potential ability to meet electricity demands of future customers. The proposed project does not involve an expansion of the transmission system service area; therefore, the project would not have the potential to generate growth by providing electrical service to an area that does not currently have electrical service. (CalPeco DEIS/DEIS/DEIR, p. 5-6).

AA-8  
cont

As noted in our comments on the draft CalPeco project, this side-steps the issue of growth *within* the areas already served by the power lines, and regional growth and impacts that will result of the increased capacity of the power lines. Now, with the NMMPA DEIR, the public is presented with a project that relies on the increase in capacity the CalPeco project proposes, yet the project document states there is no impact because the electrical line is already planned for upgrade. It appears the project documents are simply tossing the ball back and forth, while both projects claim the other will analyze the impacts. The FEIR must examine the impacts of the growth induced by the NMMPA project.

#### 4. Cumulative and Reasonably foreseeable impacts

As CEQA requires all reasonably foreseeable impacts to be included in the environmental analysis, the rezone and expansion of Northstar into the Tahoe Basin must be fully analyzed, along with the cumulative impacts of other proposed or approved but not-yet-built projects, including Homewood Mountain Resort and Squaw Valley’s proposed ski area expansions. Further, as these resorts aim to draw visitors year-round, the impacts from increased populations and VMT **during the entire year** must be analyzed. The impacts to the TRPA environmental thresholds must also be analyzed.

AA-9

The DEIR list fails to include the impacts of another proposed Plan change that would increase the cumulative impacts of these projects. Placer County has received an application for a zone change within the northern part of the Tahoe Basin – the proposed “*Martis Valley West Area Plan*.” The proposed Area Plan is illustrated in the TRPA December 2013 Governing Board packet (excerpts and image attached). The proposed Area Plan, which will also change the zoning to the new Resort Recreation District, would allow the construction of numerous townhomes, condos, and other facilities that will increase traffic in the North Shore, including but not limited to S.R. 267, as well as along the West Shore (just as visitors and new employees are apt to do, new residents will visit the West Shore). This proposed Plan change needs to be added to the list on p. 18-2 and examined in light of its cumulative impacts.