

Volume 1

# Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project

Final EIS/EIR

SCH# 2016042066



April 2019



**PREPARED FOR:**

US Forest Service  
Tahoe National Forest  
Truckee Ranger District  
10811 Stockrest Springs Road  
Truckee, CA 96161

Placer County  
Planning Services Division  
3091 County Center Drive  
Auburn, CA 95603

# Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project

## Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report

**Lead Federal Agency:** U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest

**Lead State Agency:** Placer County

**Responsible Federal Official:** Eli Ilano, Tahoe National Forest Supervisor

April 2019

### **Abstract:**

The U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest (Forest Service) proposes to amend the Alpine Meadows Ski Area term permit to authorize the Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project (The Project). The Project consists of a proposed gondola connecting Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley, with two mid-stations and multiple towers along the alignment in Placer County, California. This final environmental impact statement/environmental impact report (Final EIS/EIR) has been prepared by the Forest Service and Placer County in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), respectively.

The Forest Service purpose for the project is to improve developed winter recreation opportunities in the Scott Management Area, consistent with the 1990 Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan; the overall purpose of the project under CEQA is to enhance the visitor wintertime experience at both Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows by providing direct access between the ski areas for more convenient access to skiable terrain and resort amenities. Three action alternatives (consisting of different alignments for the proposed gondola) are analyzed in detail within this Final EIS/EIR to achieve this project purpose. Additionally, a No Action Alternative is analyzed as required by NEPA and CEQA.

### **Responsible Agencies:**

In addition to the requisite Forest Service and Placer County approvals, consultation with the following entities, or permits from these entities, may be required to implement the project: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Region 2), California State Office of Historic Preservation, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Placer County Air Pollution Control District.

### **Public Review and Comment on the Draft EIS/EIR:**

The Forest Service and County issued a Draft EIS/EIR for public review on April 27, 2018. Two public meetings were held as follows: Forest Service open house on May 22, 2018; and Placer County Planning Commission Meeting on May 24, 2018. The Final EIS/EIR includes responses to substantive comments on the Draft EIS/EIR, and revisions to the Draft EIS/EIR based on comments and additional information received.

### **Final EIS/EIR:**

The Final EIS/EIR is available online at <https://www.placer.ca.gov/2680/Squaw-Valley-Alpine-Meadows-Base-to-Base>. Printed copies are available at the Tahoe City and Truckee libraries, Placer County offices in Auburn and Tahoe City, and Tahoe National Forest offices in Nevada City and Truckee.

For further information, please contact Joe Flannery, U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest, 631 Coyote Street, Nevada City, CA, 95959, or email [jflannery@fs.fed.us](mailto:jflannery@fs.fed.us); or Heather Beckman, Placer County Planning Services Division, 775 North Lake Boulevard, Tahoe City, CA 96165, or email [HBeckman@placer.ca.gov](mailto:HBeckman@placer.ca.gov).

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**April 2019**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| °F                | degrees Fahrenheit   |
| °C                | degrees Celsius  |
| 2017 Scoping Plan | <i>California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan</i>           |
| AAUNAC            | Avalanche Artillery Users of North America Committee Standards |
| AB                | Assembly Bill  |
| ADT               | average daily traffic  |
| afy               | acre-feet per year   |
| Alpine Meadows    | Alpine Meadows Ski Area  |
| amsl              | above mean sea level   |
| ANSI              | American National Standards Institute, Inc.                    |
| asl               | above sea level  |
| ATS               | average travel speed   |
| BACT              | best available control technology                              |
| BEIG              | Built Environment Image Guide                                  |
| CAA               | federal Clean Air Act  |
| CAAA              | federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990                       |
| CAAQS             | California Ambient Air Quality Standards                       |
| CAL FIRE          | California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection          |
| Cal/OSHA          | Division of Occupational Safety and Health                     |
| CalEEMod          | California Emissions Estimator Model                           |
| CalPeco           | California Pacific Electric Company                            |
| CAP               | criteria air pollutant   |
| CARB              | California Air Resources Board                                 |
| CBC               | California Building Code                                       |
| CCAA              | California Clean Air Act                                       |
| CCC               | Comfortable Carrying Capacity                                  |
| CCR               | California Code of Regulations                                 |
| CDFW              | California Department of Fish and Wildlife                     |
| CEQ               | Council on Environmental Quality                               |
| CEQA              | California Environmental Quality Act                           |
| CFR               | Code of Federal Regulations                                    |
| CNEL              | community noise equivalent level                               |
| CNRA              | California Natural Resources Agency                            |
| CO                | carbon monoxide  |
| CO <sub>2</sub>   | carbon dioxide   |
| County            | Placer County  |

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| CPUC            | California Public Utilities Commission                     |
| CRPR            | California Rare Plant Ranks                                |
| CTR             | California Toxics Rule                                     |
| CUP             | Conditional Use Permit                                     |
| CWA             | Clean Water Act  |
| CWC             | California Water Code                                      |
| dB              | decibel  |
| dba             | A-weighted decibel   |
| dBc             | C-weighted decibel   |
| dbh             | diameter at breast height                                  |
| DWR             | California Department of Water Resources                   |
| EcoSynthesis    | EcoSynthesis Scientific & Regulatory Services              |
| EIS/EIR         | environmental impact statement/environmental impact report |
| EO 12898        | Executive Order 12898                                      |
| EPA             | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency                       |
| FEMA            | Federal Emergency Management Agency                        |
| FGC             | California Fish and Game Code                              |
| Forest Plan     | Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan    |
| Forest Service  | U.S. Forest Service  |
| FTEE            | full-time equivalent employee                              |
| GCW             | National Forest System-Granite Chief Wilderness            |
| General Plan    | <i>Placer County General Plan</i>                          |
| GHG             | greenhouse gas   |
| HAP             | hazardous air pollutant                                    |
| HCM             | <i>Highway Capacity Manual</i> , sixth edition             |
| HDPE            | high-density polyethylene                                  |
| Hz              | hertz  |
| IBC             | International Building Code                                |
| IPCC            | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change                  |
| kV              | kilovolt   |
| kWh             | kilowatt hour  |
| lb/day          | pounds per day   |
| LCFS            | Low Carbon Fuel Standard                                   |
| L <sub>dn</sub> | day-night sound level                                      |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| $L_{eq}$                  | equivalent continuous sound level                              |
| $L_{max}$                 | maximum sound level  |
| LOS                       | level of service   |
| LRMP                      | <i>Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan</i> |
| Management Plan           | <i>Olympic Valley Groundwater Management Plan</i>              |
| MCAB                      | Mountain Counties Air Basin                                    |
| MCL                       | maximum contaminant level                                      |
| mm                        | millimeter   |
| MMIP                      | Mitigation Monitoring Implementation Program                   |
| MMRP                      | mitigation monitoring and reporting program                    |
| MOU                       | memorandum of understanding                                    |
| mPa                       | micro-pascals  |
| mph                       | miles per hour   |
| MPO                       | metropolitan planning organization                             |
| MRF                       | Material Recovery Facility                                     |
| MS4                       | municipal separate storm sewer system                          |
| MT CO <sub>2e</sub> /year | metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent per year             |
| MTP                       | Metropolitan Transportation Plan                               |
| NAAQS                     | National Ambient Air Quality Standards                         |
| NDEP                      | Nevada Division of Environmental Protection                    |
| NEHRP                     | National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program                  |
| NEPA                      | National Environmental Policy Act                              |
| NESHAP                    | national emissions standards for hazardous air pollutants      |
| NFIP                      | National Flood Insurance Program                               |
| NFMA                      | National Forest Management Act                                 |
| NFS                       | National Forest System   |
| NHTSA                     | National Highway Traffic Safety Administration                 |
| NO                        | nitric oxide   |
| NO <sub>2</sub>           | nitrogen dioxide   |
| NOP                       | notice of preparation  |
| NO <sub>x</sub>           | oxides of nitrogen   |
| NPDES                     | National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System                |
| NRCS                      | Natural Resources Conservation Service                         |
| NTR                       | National Toxics Rule   |
| NWPS                      | National Wilderness Preservation System                        |
| OSMRE                     | Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement           |
| PAHA                      | Potential Avalanche Hazard Area                                |
| PCAPCD                    | Placer County Air Pollution Control District                   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| PCCP                    | <i>Placer County Conservation Plan</i>   |
| PCE                     | primary constituent element  |
| pcph                    | passenger cars per hour  |
| PCT                     | Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail  |
| PlumpJack               | PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn   |
| PM <sub>10</sub>        | respirable particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 micrometers or less |
| PM <sub>2.5</sub>       | fine particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less      |
| Porter-Cologne Act      | Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1970                                     |
| PPV                     | peak particle velocity   |
| project                 | Squaw Valley   Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project                           |
| PSD                     | Prevention of Significant Deterioration  |
| PTSF                    | Percent Time Spent Following   |
| RMS                     | root-mean-square   |
| ROD                     | Record of Decision   |
| ROG                     | reactive organic gases   |
| ROS                     | Recreation Opportunity Spectrum  |
| RPF                     | Registered Professional Forester   |
| RPM                     | Resource Protection Measure  |
| RWQCB                   | regional water quality control board   |
| SACOG                   | Sacramento Area Council of Governments   |
| SANDAG                  | <i>San Diego Association of Governments</i>  |
| SB                      | Senate Bill  |
| SCS                     | sustainable communities strategy   |
| sec/veh                 | seconds per vehicle  |
| SGMA                    | Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014                                       |
| Sierra Nevada Framework | Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment  |
| SIP                     | state implementation plan  |
| SMAQMD                  | Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District                              |
| SNFPA                   | Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment  |
| SNFPA                   | Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision Final Supplemental EIS        |
| SNYLF                   | Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog   |
| SO <sub>2</sub>         | sulfur dioxide   |
| SP                      | sound pressure level   |
| Squaw Valley            | Squaw Valley Ski Area  |
| SR                      | State Route  |
| SUP                     | special use permit   |
| SVGPLUO                 | <i>Squaw Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance</i>                              |
| SVMWC                   | Squaw Valley Mutual Water Company  |



|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| SVPSD              | Squaw Valley Public Service District                    |
| SVSH               | Squaw Valley Ski Holdings, LLC                          |
| SWMP               | stormwater management plan                              |
| SWPPP              | stormwater pollution prevention plan                    |
| SWRCB              | State Water Resources Control Board                     |
|                    |   |
| TAC                | toxic air contaminant                                   |
| TCCR               | transportation corridor concept report                  |
| the Settlement Act | Truckee-Carson-Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act |
| TMDL               | total maximum daily load                                |
| TNF                | Tahoe National Forest                                   |
| TPY                | tons per year   |
| TROA               | Truckee River Operating Agreement                       |
| TRWQMP             | Truckee River Water Quality Monitoring Plan             |
|                    |   |
| UAIC               | United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria  |
| USACE              | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers                            |
| USBM               | U.S. Bureau of Mines                                    |
| USC                | United States Code                                      |
|                    |   |
| V/C ratio          | volume-to-capacity ratio                                |
| VdB                | vibration decibels                                      |
| VMS                | Visual Management System                                |
| VMT                | vehicle miles traveled                                  |
| VQO                | Visual Quality Objectives                               |