

0162

Will Hollo

From: Michael Self <miguelsel@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 18, 2018 12:42 PM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: vote for

0162-1 | Eagerly await this long sought after marriage of two of the best managed resorts in the West. 😊

0162-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0163

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 6/10/2018 9:23:18 AM
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 Phone:
 Comments:

I strongly object to the Squaw Alpine gondola project. I find it unnecessary, a waste of money and it will be a constant eyesore to the upper Alpine Meadows valley. on the Squaw side it will look like just one more lift going up KT-22. At Alpine it will dominate the entire upper valley from the lodge all the way to the back of KT-22. At the moment there is nothing man made visible there except for Troy's lift towers. The span will tower over the Alpine parking lot and then be strung all along the ridge line. Hideous. The cluster of 7 Gasex devices is ugly as well. All this disturbance for a lift that will run from Thanksgiving to April at the very best. The comments of it being a life long dream are extremely exaggerated. Generally Squaw people ski Squaw, Alpine people like Alpine. The decision is made daily as you drive to the mountains. Each mountain is large enough to spend days skiing without needing more terrain. I predict the gondola will be lightly used. Better to serve the few by a few shuttles. This gondola is a gimmick to look good in advertising. The Disneyland effect is apparent in Squaw's propaganda, just look at the toy models in the lodges. This project is NOT worth the sacrifice!!

0163-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project. The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0164

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 6/11/2018 1:44:45 PM
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 Email: c.dane.shannon@gmail.com
 Phone: 5304485348
 Comments:
 To Whom it may concern,

0164-1

I am 100% completely against this project. It would be another Human-made scar in the Sierra that will never go away. It is just another failed direction that KSL corporation lack of marketing sight has tried to bring to our community. People come to the mountains to escape manmade structures and machines, allowing this will only ruin an easily accessible escape to the wilderness. We need places to go and not see manmade buildings or machines. There is something powerful about these pristine places that cleanse the soul and mind. We can't afford as a society to keep sacrificing these places that provide natural mental health care for no reason other than a marketing tool and lazy ski coaches trying to kill time in their lessons.

The damage the road to build the terminal, the trucks, machines, the greases and oils to keep it running, the lift towers, the people that just don't care littering, the noises, the eyesore of wires and the terminal... so many environmental impacts that are not needed. This lift is not needed. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt "Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance."

As representatives of our community, please represent our community and deny this project and protect us and the area from unneeded and unavoidable environmental impacts.

Thanks for listening to the community.

Best regards,

Dane Shannon

0164-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0165-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment expresses concern about impacts to the Granite Chief Wilderness as well as other recreational areas and loss of trees and vegetation. These issues are addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR in Sections 4.3, "Wilderness," 4.1, "Recreation," and 4.12, "Vegetation." As for tree removal, see Impact 4.12-3 for a discussion of the number of trees anticipated to be removed under each alternative. As noted on page 4.12-34, "[r]emoval of individual trees would be greatest under Alternative 3 (104 trees) compared to Alternative 2 (42 trees) and Alternative 4 (38 trees); however, more trees would be at risk of possible removal, damage, or mortality under Alternative 2 (286 trees) compared to Alternative 3 (133 trees) and Alternative 4 (176 trees)."

Jeff Shellito
326 Rivergate Way
Sacramento, CA 95831
June 10, 2018

Via E-Mail and U.S. Mail

Shirlee Herrington
Environmental Coordination Service
Community Development Resource Agency
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190
Auburn, CA 95603

Eli Llano, Supervisor
Tahoe National Forest
631 Coyote Street
Nevada City, CA 95959

Heather Beckman, Associate Planner
Placer Count, Planning Services Division
775 North Lake Boulevard
Tahoe City, CA 96145

Joe Flannery, Wilderness & Winter Sports
Tahoe National Forest
10811 Stockrest Springs Rd
Truckee, CA 96161

Subject: Comments on the Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows Gondola EIR/EIS

Dear Ms. Herrington, Ms. Beckman, Mr. Llano, and Mr. Flannery:

I am a homeowner in Truckee and have been an alpine skier in this region since the early 1970's. For the past 13 years, I have been a yearly season pass holder at local ski resorts, including Sugar Bowl, Northstar, plus Squaw Valley & Alpine Meadows before and since they were acquired by KSL and began to be jointly operated.

Equally important, I was a longtime member of the Sierra Club (SC) and worked on the collective effort to secure federal designation of the Granite Chief Wilderness (GCW) 40 years ago when I chaired the GCW task force and served on the SC Mother Lode chapter Executive Committee.

0165-1

In reviewing the joint EIR/EIS, it is clear that the Option #2 gondola alignment through the GCW has the most numerous and significant adverse environmental impacts and should not be approved under any circumstances. Although both of the other alternative alignment routes do not cross directly through the GCW, the alignment of Option #3 would still be congruent with a portion of the Congressionally-designated wilderness boundary and is therefore also inappropriate. All three alternative gondola alignments (including Option #4) will become permanent and intrusive structures built across the primary USFS trail the public uses for day hiking, backpacking and horse riding to access the GCW, particularly the popular Five Lakes area. Construction will entail massive disruption of an undeveloped, steep slope mountain landscape and removal an unknown number of trees & vegetation.

0165

0165-2 | The EIR/EIS notes that for 6-8 months during gondola construction, the Five Lakes trail could be temporarily closed while towers are installed by helicopter, plus drilling and/or blasting activities are performed. Closure of this trail would totally deprive the public ANY access to the GCW and the popular Five Lakes area from spring through the fall or early winter of 2019. This is unreasonable and unacceptable, so additional mitigation measures should be required to limit such trail closures.

0165-3 | The EIR/EIS indicates that Squaw Valley has proposed measures to mitigate the impact of installing permanent towers and mid-mountain transfer stations, such as use of certain paint colors, requiring only wintertime operations during the ski season, plus removal and storage of the gondola cars at the base facilities in Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows during the spring, summer and fall months. However, USFS and Placer County should require further mitigation measures. These are needed to mitigate: (1) the cumulative effects related to physical construction and operation of the gondola and mid-mountain transfer stations; and (2) growth-inducing impacts encouraging construction of the "White Wolf Resort" (WWR) development by the owner of the Caldwell private inholding upon which all 3 alternative gondola alignments would be built and facilitated. The planned White Wolf Resort will include more than two dozen new homes, plus tennis courts, stables, parking structures & other recreational features.

0165-4 | Specifically, I recommend that, if the USFS and Placer Co. approve any of the gondola alternatives, as additional mitigation for the gondola construction you should require the removal of all of the existing black towers shown in EIR/EIS maps as components of the unfinished "KT 22 South" chairlift. The placement and construction of the Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows gondola in any of the 3 alignment alternatives requires the cooperation or partnership by Squaw Valley/KSL with the owner of the Caldwell property inholding. Presumably, at a minimum, this includes payment of a substantial financial consideration for construction access and a permanent gondola easement across that property. It is reasonable to require removal of these existing and unfinished lift towers as mitigation for approving construction of 50 or more additional towers for a new gondola costing tens of millions of dollars.

0165-5 | Lastly, I am concerned that if you approve any of the 3 alternative gondola alignments, with the effect of Climate Change on winter snowfall and temperature patterns, this gondola could become a permanent "white elephant" like the two chairlifts the Tahoe National Forest approved that Sugar Bowl ski resort constructed across USFS land during the past 10 years. These were originally intended to provide Sugar Bowl skiers additional access to terrain and summits of Mt. Judah and Crow's Nest peak. But over the past two ski seasons, and despite a much-higher-than average snowfall during the winter of 2016-17, these new chairlifts were rarely operated by Sugar Bowl resort due to insufficient snow coverage and for cost saving reasons. I don't believe the Summit Chair ever operated this past winter. Plus, most (if not all) Tahoe area ski resorts had only limited terrain open during the 2017 Christmas holiday season.

-2-

0165-2, Recreation (R1)

RPMs REC-1 and REC-3 are included as a component of the project to provide mitigation for these trail closures. In particular, RPM REC-1 states that "...A project website will be developed for the public to ask questions about the construction process and schedule. Concerns related to dust, noise, odor, trail closures, and access restrictions associated with construction activities will be addressed within this program."

In addition, RPM REC-3 states that "Signs advising recreationists of construction activities and directing them to alternative trails will be posted at all trail access points or in locations as determined through coordination with the respective jurisdictional agencies. Signage describing the closures will be posted at trail access points one week prior to closures, will remain posted during the entire closure period, and will be removed upon completion of construction."

0165-3, Resources Protection Measures/Mitigation Measures (RPM/MM)

The comment states that the Forest Service and Placer County should require additional mitigation measures, but does not provide any details as to what these additional measures should entail. RPMs and mitigation measures are identified throughout the Draft EIS/EIR to reduce the project's potential environmental effects, including those related to the physical construction and operation of the gondola and mid-mountain transfer stations, as the comment suggests. The proposed White Wolf development, though considered in the Draft EIS/EIR as part of the cumulative effects analysis, is not part of the project. Therefore, mitigation measures to address construction-related effects of the White Wolf development are not included in the Draft EIS/EIR. This separate project would be subject to separate environmental review by the County, at which time mitigation would be identified and included as a condition of project approval. Cumulative effects of the gondola project in connection with other probable future projects (including the proposed White Wolf Development) are evaluated in Sections 4.1 through 4.17 in the Draft EIS/EIR.

0165-4, Project Description (PD)

0165

In conjunction with the proposal being reviewed within this EIS/EIR, neither the Forest Service nor Placer County have jurisdiction over the privately owned Caldwell Property and specifically the "KT South" chairlift project and therefore, do not have jurisdiction to require removal of the unfinished "KT South" chairlift. Whether Mr. Caldwell would complete or abandon his approved and constructed lift project in the future is speculative and is beyond the scope of this analysis.

0165-5, Greenhouse Gases (GHG)

The commenter is concerned that the proposed gondola will not operate frequently due to reduced snow levels associated with changing climate. This potential outcome is not an impact on the project that could result in increased risk of hazards (e.g., flooding, landslides) or other adverse environmental effects not already evaluated and identified in the EIS/EIR. Climate change is addressed in Section 4.11, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change," in the Draft EIS/EIR. See in particular the discussion under Impact 4.11-2, which describes the impacts of climate change on the project. The option of increasing shuttle service rather than building the gondola identified in the comment is addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR in section 2.3.2, "Alternatives Considered but Not Evaluated Further." Also see the Master Response above on the Improvements to Existing Shuttle System Alternative provided in Section 1.8, "Master Responses."

0165

0165-5 cont'd, Greenhouse Gases (GHG)

0165-5
cont'd

Earlier this year, scientists from the UCLA Center for Climate Science recently issued in a new report entitled "Climate Change in the Sierra Nevada." The report indicates under a business-as-usual climate trajectory, the state's snowpack may decline by up to 64 percent by the end of the century. The authors note that this year's below-average snowpack may represent what typical conditions may be like in the coming decades. Rising global temperatures are a major factor, but so are changes in overall precipitation patterns and a shift from snowstorms to rain like we experienced both earlier this year and in 2017.

Should warming temperatures and the predicted changes to wintertime snowfall patterns require Squaw Valley-Alpine Meadows to similarly modify or restrict operation of its chairlifts and affect terrain availability at either or both resorts, this could significantly affect the frequency and need to operate the proposed gondola. More importantly, the changes to Sierra Nevada precipitation patterns and snowfall predicted by recent studies suggest that building the gondola is unnecessary and a bad capital investment.

The EIR/EIS is flawed because it fails to discuss or analyze how predicted changes to wintertime snowfall and melting rates could adversely affect ski resort operations and, more importantly, the need for constructing a permanent gondola infrastructure for transporting skiers between the two resorts during the winter. That will only lead to pressure for eventually allowing Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows to operate the gondola as a revenue generating tourist attraction during the summertime months like it now does with the tram that transports tourists and hikers to its High Camp facilities. Maintaining or expanding operation of the free shuttle vans between Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows during the winter ski season would provide the resorts more flexibility without the intrusiveness, environmental devastation and visual blight that a permanent gondola facility would entail, plus be cheaper.

Thank you for considering my comments and recommendations for the EIS/EIR.

Sincerely,

/S/

JEFF SHELLITO

Shirlee Herrington

From: Evan Smith <h2obuffalo@me.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2018 3:42 PM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: Draft EIS for the gondola between Squaw and Alpine

To whom it concerns:

0168-1 | As a full time Alpine Meadows resident I feel strongly that the proposed gondola connecting Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows has too many negative attributes to be acceptable. The gas ex explorers will be really loud, which will impact quality of life for residents. It's one thing to have a few gas ex, but 8 with the gondola plus the 4 they installed last fall is a lot! I'm all for avalanche control, but using it to control closed terrain for the gondola is unnecessary and unacceptable.

0168-2 | I also feel strongly about the 5 lakes trail impacts, Troy Caldwell's unfinished and unused lift is an eyesore, we do not need more. Overdevelopment will not make this place better, it will degrade it. Squaw is using this gondola simply as a marketing gimmick, people who've never been here will see that 6000 acres blurb on marketing material and think it's amazing, but in truth, it really changes nothing in positive ways and definitely creates many negative changes.

0168-3 | Squaw has a proven record of selfish, anti-community, company-town behavior and it is completely unacceptable. Squaw trumpets their social responsibility, but actually, when one looks at their record, it's quite small. They ask for donations for their avalanche dog program for example, when that is just something they should fund themselves. The narcissism and self-serving behavior that has been

0168-1, Noise (N)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0168-2, Opinion (O1)

Impacts related to the Five Lakes Trail are addressed in Section 4.1, "Recreation," and visual impacts are addressed in Section 4.2, "Visual Resources," of the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0168-3, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0168

0168-3
cont'd

the norm the past 10 years now is making this area worse, and neither locals nor tourists deserve that.

Do not allow the gondola, enough is enough. Squaw has proven they have no regard for customer service or social responsibility, that is not an entity whom should be given further development rights.

Very sincerely,
Evan Smith

0168-3 cont'd, Opinion (O1)

Shirlee Herrington

From: Jim Smith <jimnjotahoe@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Sunday, June 03, 2018 2:02 PM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: gondola

0169-1 | At first I thought the gondola was a good idea, but after putting more thought into it I think it's not such a good idea. I feel that on a big weather winter, the gondola won't run much due to winds that can blow through the area where the gondola will go which I hope has been thought about. There fore the connection between the two resorts will still have to be by shuttle bus. If you were to up grade the fleet of buses with all electric or propane buses that would be a positive for the environment and you could show the public that you are being as "green" as possible. I also feel that your money would be better spent up grading the lift system at Alpine Meadows for starters. They are rather behind the times as far as some of the lifts. That upgrading would cost far less than the gondola, and probably make a lot of people happy. The amount of terrain that the gondola would open is't that much in relation to the cost of the lift. The terrain that would open at Alpine wouldn't be that good after a storm due to the exposure of the area in Estelle Bowl and the Poma Rocks area. Since you seem to be getting more opposition to this proposal, may be you should be wiser with your money. Maybe you should put a weather station in the proposed gondola area and see what kind of wind recording you get to see if the lift would run enough to make it worth while to spend that kind on money on a lift that might not run much. I have been skiing Alpine Meadows and worked there for the past 47 years. Thanks for listening to my thoughts.

Jimmy Smith

0169-1, Alternatives (A)

Wind closures would be implemented as necessary to ensure safe operation of the gondola. Further detail on this matter is beyond the scope of this analysis, as the specific operational procedures of the gondola would be determined pending Forest Service and Placer County approval of any of the action alternatives.

Section 2.3.2.1, "Improvements to Existing Shuttle System Alternative," in the Draft EIS/EIR evaluates a potential alternative to the project that would involve improving the existing shuttle system and expanding it to provide enhanced access between the ski resorts. See the Master Response above on the Improvements to Existing Shuttle System Alternative provided in Section 1.8, "Master Responses."

Upgrading the lift system at Alpine Meadow, though not identified as an alternative in the Draft EIS/EIR, would (like the shuttle system alternative above) not meet the project's purpose and need. Therefore, it is not analyzed in this Final EIS/EIR.

0170

Shirlee Herrington

From: Joe Smith <truckeejoe47@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 01, 2018 3:52 PM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows Gondola Project

0170-1

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a 11 year resident of Truckee and spend significant time during all seasons in the area which is being considered for this project. Not unlike the Martis Valley project and the KLS project involving increased housing and the water theme park these projects push an increase in human activity while even the existing capacity is strained in regards to egress and digress. Hwy 89 is already maxed out. In addition the notion that you can shelter in place given the now historic velocity and intensity of the fires (Tubbs and Thomas Fire) is absurd. Those two factors alone should be enough to convince the BOS. Unfortunately only one of the Supervisor's live in this area so they have no personal or direct experience or knowledge of what this impact has otherwise they would already drop their support for such an I'll conceived development. It is time for everyone to simply be truthful and transparent. The movement and accumulation of more property tax revenue, the increase in profit and return on capital appears to trump logic and common sense. Once the projects become reality there is no reversal. There is no other Lake Tahoe Basin or surrounding environs. Nature did not design it to tolerate even the current human impact. Why in the world would anyone in their right mind compound the situation by adding more. Who is going to accept the blame if a Thomas Fire event which was consuming one acre per second hits our area on a red flag warning day trapping hundreds if not thousands of people with no plausible escape route.

Enough is enough.

Thank You for your consideration. Feel free to contact me.

Joe Smith
 10138 Colton Creek Rd
 Truckee, 96161
truckeejoe47@gmail.com
 530 536 6080

0170-1, Opinion (O1)

Traffic impacts are addressed in Section 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," of the Draft EIS/EIR.

Proposed operation and long-term maintenance of the gondola is described on pages 2-13 and 2-14 of the Draft EIS/EIR, which states that the proposed gondola would only be operational during the winter, and would therefore only increase visitation in the winter, when there is minimal wildfire risk. See Section 4.6, "Public Safety," in the Draft EIS/EIR. Specifically, see the discussion under Impact 4.6-1, which describes hazards (including wildfire hazards) associated with project construction, operation, and maintenance. Several RPMs are identified therein that wildfire hazards, although these are directed at project construction, which would occur during the summer months. As stated above, project operation would be limited to the winter months. Monitoring and enforcement of RPM implementation would be conducted by the Forest Service and the County.

Also, it is important to note that the Gazex facilities have been removed by Squaw Valley Ski Holdings (SVSH) as a component of the proposal. The Gazex facilities were a primary origin of the concern that wildfire risk would increase as a result of the project (because of the storage of oxygen and propane that is required for operation of Gazex facilities); because of their removal from the proposal, it is even less likely that wildfire risk would increase as a result of the project.

Will Hollo

From: Linda Speizer <speizer428@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 5, 2018 12:52 PM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: Squaw Alpine Proposed Gondola

0171-1 | Please do not approve the proposed gondola project at Squaw Valley.
The Granite Chief Wilderness and surrounding areas should be preserved and kept as pristine and free from human development as possible.
Please do not allow profit motives from one company to adversely affect what has been untouched for millions of years.
Thank you.
Linda Speizer
P.O. Box 2928
Kings Beach, CA 96143

0171-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment is directed towards the project approval process and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. All comment letters submitted during the Draft EIS/EIR public review period will be reviewed and considered by the Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors before a decision on the project is rendered.

0172

Shirlee Herrington

From: Linda Speizer <speizer428@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 05, 2018 12:09 PM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows Gondola Project

0172-1 | Please do not allow the profit motives of one company to destroy what has been a pristine, untouched and unique area for millions of years. It is your job to protect these special areas. If you want more tax dollars build something in Roseville or Auburn. Please leave the Tahoe Basin alone.
Thank you.
Linda Speizer
P.O. Box 2928
Kings Beach, CA 96143

0172-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0173

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 5/22/2018 11:52:22 AM
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Phone: 720-201-5363
Comments:

I support the concept of connection of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows through an aerial tramway. It is far and away better than the existing bus transportation both from a guest services perspective and reducing environmental impacts. all alternatives except the no action alternative would work well. Alternative 2 from a users perspective provides great views and access to KT22 and Buttress terrain. Given concerns about the lift alignment and proximity to Granite Chief Wilderness and potential impacts to the Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog Alternative 4 appears as the best action alternative. I urge the USFS to chose Alternative 4 in approval of this project.

0173-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0174

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 5/24/2018 3:39:53 PM
First name: Jim
Last name: Spenst
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Province/Region:
Zip/Postal Code: 80424
Country: United States
Email: jimspenst@me.com
Phone: 720-201-5363
Comments:

0174-1

I support the approval of this project by both Placer County and USFS. Connection of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows by an Aerial Tramway has been discussed for many years. An Aerial Tramway is a much better environmental and guest services solution for combining the two resorts than the current bus service. In the long run it is the best solution for seamless connection of the two resorts and combining both areas into one resort. Any of the alternatives 2,3 or 4 will work well. From a skier perspective and guest experience I prefer Alt2. I believe that the visual and environmental concerns on Alt.2 that arouse during scoping and field review were overstated and can be easily mitigated. It provides skiing from both mid- stations and the experience riding the tramway would be one of the best in the world. I do however think that the number of political hurdles make Alt.2 unlikely to be the preferred alternative in the process of EIS/EIR approval. I support Alt.4 as it moves away from the Granite Chief Wilderness Boundary and creates distance from the known population of Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog(s) in Barstool Lake that is a concern of many with Alt.2

0174-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment is directed towards the project approval process and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. All comment letters submitted during the Draft EIS/EIR public review period will be reviewed and considered by the Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors before a decision on the project is rendered.

0177

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 6/11/2018 1:47:38 PM
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 Last name: Stach
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 Phone: 01-415-456-6470
 Comments:

0177-1 | KSL has big balls to propose building any transportation system OVER a wilderness area! And building one within visible and/or earshot range of a wilderness area is equally appalling! The Sierra Club was even required to remove a historic cabin, long in existence before the Granite Chief Wilderness area was created! So how can a commercial organization now be permitted to compromise this area?! Within the skiing community, the ones that will be served by this system, the majority are not in favor, particularly those that reside in or enjoy using the outdoors of the Tahoe Basin. I am a hiker, sliver/back country skier, member of the Tahoe Trampers and one who has enjoyed this pristine gem year round for over 35 years, I feel many qualities of the Five Lakes area will be destroyed. And any mechanized system in or near a wilderness area will adversely affect the ecosystem as well. PLEASE STOP further commercial expansion of the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows areas with this ill conceived plan. Thank You for considering my objections.

0177-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project. The comment makes reference to the Gondola crossing the Granite Chief Wilderness. While the gondola would cross through a portion of the congressionally mapped Granite Chief Wilderness (GCW) under Alternative 2, it would cross only through private lands located within the congressionally mapped GCW (in particular, through a 54.6-acre portion of the privately owned Caldwell property). While the Wilderness Act of 1964 establishes land use restrictions for federally owned lands within congressionally mapped wilderness areas, these land use restriction do not apply on private lands. Please refer to Section 4.3, "Wilderness" of the Final EIS/EIR for further information.

0178

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 6/5/2018 3:09:18 PM
First name: Arthur
Last name: Strauss
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Address2:
City: Durham
State:
Province/Region: NC
Zip/Postal Code: 27703
Country: United States
Email: artstrauss412@gmail.com
Phone: 6034758434
Comments:

0178-1

I ski and hike at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows. I've had a seasons pass the last 4 years and ski 40+ days a year and hike about 10 days. I think the gondola would wreck the 5 Lakes Trail and thus the entire Granite Chief Wilderness. I'm not sure why KSL wants to build the gondola other than they think it will make them more money. I live in Carnelian Bay for half of the year. Everyone who lives along the Alpine Meadows Road that I have spoken to does not think the gondola is a good idea. So, if most of the people who would be most affected by the project are against it why would the USFS permit it?

0178-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

Shirlee Herrington

From: Robert Tetrault <bob.tetrode@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 11, 2018 3:35 PM
To: comments@squawalpinegondola-eis.com; Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: California Express - NOT!

We have lived at Alpine Meadows on John Scott Trail for more than 30 years. We are old and close friends with Troy and Sue Caldwell since the early 70's, and support their dream of their own ski area.

0180-1

However, the gondola brings too many negatives to the area: 1) directly adjacent to the Granite Chief Wilderness, 2) a flood of skiers from the intermediate stations of all Alternatives. 3) It is a falsehood that the gondola will relieve traffic; in fact, it will increase traffic from all of the skiers wishing to "check out" the new headliner chairlift. It will increase traffic most specifically in Alpine Meadows because Squaw already gets parked out and Alpine does too. But since Squaw parks out earlier, this will exacerbate problems at Alpine. 4) Primarily, however, the Alternative preferred by SquawAlpine will mandate a total of 8 new Gazex machines in Estelle Bowl. Since they have been installed on the ridge between Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows Road, their explosions are *at least* 100X louder than the hand charges placed prior to this. Our steel-framed house literally shakes on its foundation every time they are set off. We do not want any more of them in Alpine Meadows. The ones protecting the Alpine Meadows Road have a very negative impact on every house in Alpine Meadows. Section 4.9.3 does not explore the *very* negative effect these devices have on residents in Alpine Meadows.

If you must approve this rube-goldberg eyesore, please direct your approvals to Alternative 4 with the least number of Gazex devices.

Sincerely,

Robert Tetrault
 Mary Coolidge
 2180 John Scott Trail

0180-1, Noise (N)

Impacts related to the Granite Chief Wilderness are addressed in Section 4.3, "Wilderness," of the Draft EIS/EIR.

As stated in the Draft EIS/EIR on page 5-13, "Although the project is expected to result in approximately 7,371 additional visitor-days per month (which would average to approximately 246 visitors per day), these additional visitors would be limited to short-term visits (i.e., a day or days) during the operating (winter season) (SE Group and RRC Associates 2018)."

Traffic impacts are addressed in Section 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," of the Draft EIS/EIR, including traffic generated by an anticipated increase in visitation.

Although the comment raises concerns regarding these environmental topic areas, no specific issues related to the analysis or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised.

The comment refers to the Gazex avalanche mitigation system, which was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0181

Will Hollo

From: Phillip_imap <ptopping@pacbell.net>
Sent: Saturday, May 19, 2018 8:54 PM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: Support for Squaw/Alpine's California Express Gondola

Dear USFS/Placer County:

0181-1

I support the California Express Gondola because it will make what is currently a once a year experience for me and my family an every day experience when we ski at Squaw Valley. We ski at Squaw about 15 days a year but only one at Alpine because it is such a hassle to ski at both in the same day. Alpine & Squaw in the same day is a spectacular combination.
Phillip Topping
Sent from my iPhone

0181-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

Shirlee Herrington

From: jmtornese@aol.com
Sent: Friday, June 08, 2018 12:35 AM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services; comments@squawalpinegondola-eis.com
Subject: Gondola Project EIR/S - comments

Dear U.S. Forest Service & Placer County,

0182-1

We are writing to express our concern with the aerial gondola proposed from Squaw Ski Resort to Alpine. We hike the Granite Chief Wilderness and 5 Lakes area a lot during the summer with our friends. There are usually quite a number of people hiking on these trails. It is a beautiful and calming experience. We are especially concerned about the environmental impacts to this area. We already see some gondola supports overhead while hiking, which are very unattractive. Please don't make it worse!! We are also concerned with the potential development of the White Wolf project and the encouragement of more significant environmental impacts later.

In particular, Alternative 2 should NOT be allowed! There are alternative alignments that would not run through land designated by Congress for national wilderness protection. Even the project's most "environmentally superior" route would have 33 adverse environmental impacts, including traffic, loss of wildlife habitat and destruction of solitude & recreational activities, especially hiking.

PLEASE ALIGN THIS GONDOLA ROUTE AWAY FROM THE 5 LAKES AND GRANITE CHIEF WILDERNESS AREA. OTHERWISE, IT WILL NO LONGER BE "WILDERNESS" !!

Below are the important points to consider.
 Thank you,

Judith Tornese and Jerry Winters
 6770 Springs Court
 Tahoma, Ca. 96142

0182-2

- **Overall impacts:** Squaw/Alpine's proposed alignment (Alt. 2) has numerous significant environmental impacts and the greatest impacts to the Granite Chief Wilderness Area (GCWA). Given there are feasible alternatives available,
- **Traffic:** The gondola will increase traffic in the North Tahoe region and Tahoe Basin. All available mitigation options should be included to reduce this impact.
- **Recreation:** The new gondola will increase noise, degrade views, and detract from the overall wilderness experience along the Five Lakes Trail and within the GCWA.
- **Scenic views:** The gondola will degrade the scenic beauty of the area, including from within the GCWA. (Note: Alternatives 3 and 4 have the least amount of visual impact to the GCWA).
- **Growth-inducement:** The gondola would make the adjacent proposed "White Wolf Subdivision" - a 38-unit luxury home development with a clubhouse/lodge, ski resort facilities, warming hut, and ski lift - more likely to be developed in the future as the subdivision would

0182-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0182-2, Other (O2)

These issues are addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR in Sections 4.3, "Wilderness," 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," 4.1, "Recreation," 4.2, "Visual Resources," and 5.2.3, "Growth-Inducing Impacts," of the Draft EIS/EIR. Cumulative effects of the project in connection with other probable future projects (including the proposed White Wolf Development) are evaluated in Sections 4.1 through 4.17 in the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0182

0182-2 |
cont'd

connect to the gondola, leading to more growth and traffic in the future.

0182-2 cont'd, Other (O2)

0183

Mr. Eli Llano, Supervisor
Tahoe National Forest
631 Coyote Street
Nevada City, CA 95959

Mr. Eli Llano.

0183-1

Growing up in the Mad River Valley of Vermont, I got to witness the impact of a lift connecting two iconic mountains at the Sugarbush Resort; Mt. Ellen with Lincoln Peak. When the lift was originally purposed, the town's overall view of the project was the negative impact it would have on the environment and the natural homes of the wildlife, especially bears. The American Skiing Corporation, who had recently purchased the mountains, was installing this purposed lift and no one believed they could do all the things that they stated they would do with the project. ASC (American Skiing Corporation) as a corporation didn't really do anything right but they did everything they promised with this inter-connecting lift; they preserved wildlife, did all the right steps in the environmental impact to a minimum, and decreased traffic between the mountains. Since the years of the lifts installation, the area between the mountains has grown to be some of the best off-piste skiing, created a vast trail system for hiking and maintained the beauty of the wildlife by following all the steps they outlined to create this lift system while also decreasing traffic between the two mountains.

Watching the plan to execution process with ASC back in the late 1990s in the Mad River Valley, I have full confidence in the approach that KSL / Squaw Valley is taking in the "California Express" inter-connecting gondola. The leadership, company and individuals involved in this project are far superior in the process of planning to execution to the ones that lead the charge back in the Mad River Valley for their inter-connecting lift. The California Express would provide ease of access to iconic mountains, it would decrease traffic between the mountains, and it would provide access to numerous areas. I fully trust the team at SV | AM and KSL to complete the project in the manners that they have outlined to complete a needed step in the connection of two of the most iconic mountains in the world.

I want to write, with full confidence my support for the California Express. Through the expansion of recreation opportunities, the new access will provide more adventures for the visitors of Lake Tahoe via the access to new terrain for all (able body and disabled). Providing access to the outdoors is essential in this world, and the inter-connecting lift will do just that for all.

Thank you for your time in regards to this letter,



ROY TUSCANY
Reno, NV

0183-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0184

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 5/23/2018 2:03:23 PM
First name: Jeff
Last name: Tweddale
Organization: BookingCenter
Title: President
Official Representative/Member Indicator:
Address1: 495 tramway unit 8
Address2:
City: Stateline
State: NV
Province/Region:
Zip/Postal Code: 89449
Country: United States
Email: jeff@bookingcenter.com
Phone: 7074861292
Comments:

0184-1

The proposed changes to squaw Valley, both to environmental sensitivity to the increased use in traffic, seem completely incomparable with the Tahoe we all know and love. Even though our company, booking center, helps promote tourism to Lake Tahoe, these large scale developments will have an adverse impact on the brand, and experience this lovely area. We urge the planning department to keep the human scale of Lake Tahoe development in mind, and not capitulate to developers trying to make more money. When it comes to preserving the Tahoe basin, smaller is better.

Thanks, Jeff Tweddale, President of BookingCenter

0184-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

Shirlee Herrington

From: JESSICA VANPERNIS <jess.vanpernis@me.com>
Sent: Friday, May 18, 2018 4:37 PM
To: comments@squawalpinegondola-eis.com; Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: Please approve the California Express Gondola

0186-1

Good afternoon,

After reviewing the thorough environmental studies performed related to the proposed California Express Gondola project, I wanted to express my support for the project and encourage USFS and Placer County officials to approve it.

I support the gondola because I am a snowboarder who frequents both Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows, and I see the value to our community in finally realizing the long-time vision of connecting the two mountains. I believe the connection will enhance the ski and ride experience, and has the potential to remove cars off the road between Squaw and Alpine.

Please approve an alignment for the California Express Gondola project and let this skier transport lift finally become reality. Thank you for your consideration.

Jessica VanPernis Weaver
 Kings Beach, CA resident and Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows season passholder

0186-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter’s opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0187

Shirlee Herrington

From: Tricia Vastine <triciavastine@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2018 4:52 PM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: Not in favor of AM/Squaw gondola

0187-1

As a full time resident of Alpine Meadows, I am not in favor of the gondola project. This gondola will only serve KSL and not the residents of these two valleys. I am worried about the environmental impact of the gondola on the granite chief wilderness area as well as the impact the gas ex cannons have on the underlying rock structure.

Thank you,
Tricia Vastine
2039 Bear Creek Drive
Alpine Meadows, CA

0187-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project. The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

Will Hollo

From: Scott Vaupen <scottvaupen@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2018 12:52 PM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: Alpine Squaw gondola

0188-1

I'm writing to give my full blown support to the gondola connecting the two ski resorts together. For too long, the traffic between the two resorts has been horrendous. I can't imagine the amount of pollution this has caused. Greenhouse gasses will be reduced since the horrible traffic will be alleviated. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Scott Vaupen
2090 Chalet Rd #9

0188-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0190

Ellie Waller Comments for the Record Placer County Planning Commission May 24, 2018
 Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola and Gary Davis Parking Permit Revocation *(with additional comments not made during public hearing on both agenda items)*

ALPINE MEADOWS BASE-TO-BASE GONDOLA

0190-1 | SIMPLY STATED: Keep the gondola alignment out of the “Congressionally” designated wilderness and design it to be low profile for a better visual outcome that will have less of a visual impact on Five Lakes and the wilderness experience which is another outdoor recreation arena.

This comes down to a skier experience at the expense of the environmentally superior and less scenic impacts alternatives.

0190-2 | Be reminded that any number increase of people on SR 89 will exacerbate an already overburdened highway. Caltrans, Placer Sheriff and CHP tried a lane shift this past season unsuccessfully and ultimately creates additional evacuation impacts.

0190-3 | Lastly, Martis Valley West Parcel is an excellent example of community pushback due to obvious scenic issues building atop a ridgeline, evacuation issues and unintended but real impacts to the Tahoe Basin.
 Duly note the respect the community has for this commission for the extraordinary research and ultimately not certifying the Martis Valley West Parcel EIR that was sadly overturned by the Board of Supervisors and now in litigation.

From Staff Report

0190-4 | **Project Area and Land Ownership**
 The gondola is proposed in an area with complex property ownership and designations. The Squaw Valley resort is operated almost entirely on privately owned land. The majority of Alpine Meadows resort, however, is located on National Forest System (NFS) land and is operated under a Special Use Permit (SUP) with the Tahoe National Forest. Between them is the “Caldwell property”, a private parcel through which the proposed gondola must traverse for the two resorts to be connected. The federally managed and protected Granite Chief Wilderness (GCW) is located immediately west of the proposed gondola alignment. The eastern Caldwell property line abuts the GCW, and a portion of the congressionally mapped GCW (discussed below) extends eastward onto the Caldwell property (Figure 1).
 The privately owned lands within the congressionally mapped GCW make up a 54.6 acre “bulge” that extends from the National Forest System-GCW onto the Caldwell property (see yellow dashed markings on Figure 1 below). The federal Wilderness Act of 1964 prohibits development on national forest lands contained within congressionally mapped wilderness areas, with a primary goal of maintaining the untrammeled, natural and undeveloped quality of said lands, and to maintain the outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation that exist on these lands (see DEIS/EIR Chapter 4.3 for full discussion). In 1984, Congress issued the California Wilderness Act of 1984, which identified a 25,256-acre area as the Granite Chief Wilderness. Within the congressionally mapped GCW are 177 acres of privately owned land (including the “bulge” described above) that are not afforded the protections of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act of 1964 directed that the FS would attempt to acquire these privately held lands contained within congressionally mapped

0190-1, Other (O2)

Impacts related to the Granite Chief Wilderness and visual resources are addressed in Sections 4.3, "Wilderness," and 4.2., "Visual Resources," respectively, in the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0190-2, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)

Traffic impacts are addressed in Section 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," in the Draft EIS/EIR. Emergency evacuation is addressed on pages 4.6-8 and 4.6-9 of the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0190-3, Other (O2)

No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0190-4, Other (O2)

No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

Ellie Waller Comments for the Record Placer County Planning Commission May 24, 2018
 Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola and Gary Davis Parking Permit Revocation *(with additional comments not made during public hearing on both agenda items)*

0190-4 cont'd, Other (O2)

0190-4
 cont'd

wilderness areas so that they could be afforded the protections of the Wilderness Act of 1964. At the time of this writing, the 54.6 acre "bulge" on the Caldwell property has not been acquired by the FS and remains under private ownership. As such, the land use management direction and restrictions imposed by the federal Wilderness Act of 1964 do not apply to these lands (or any of the 177 acres of privately owned land within the congressionally mapped GCW). Development is permissible on these privately held lands.

0190-5, Public Safety (PS)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

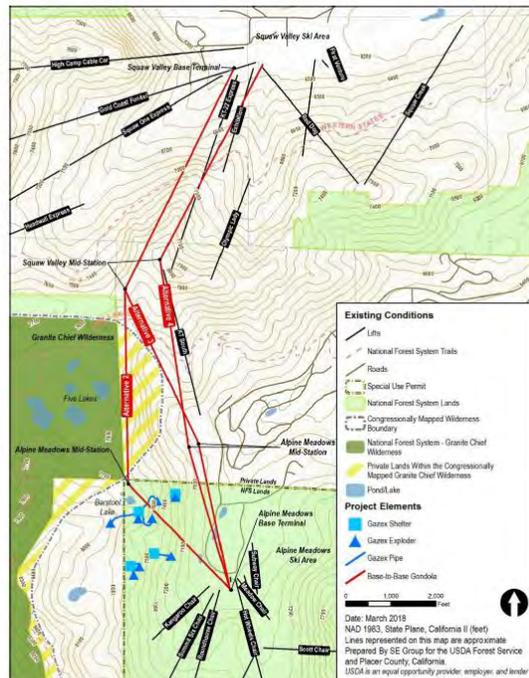


Figure 1: Gondola alternatives; land ownership and designations

0190-5

One other comment that I'm adding, not made during public comment, is the NEED to fully investigate, assess and determine potential public, health and safety issues related to the use of the gazex equipment to homes, people and the immediate environment it is built upon.

0190

Ellie Waller Comments for the Record Placer County Planning Commission May 24, 2018
Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola and Gary Davis Parking Permit Revocation *(with additional comments not made during public hearing on both agenda items)*

0190-6, Other (O2)

No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment.

No further response is warranted.

0190-6

GARY DAVIS BUILDING PARKING PERMIT REVOCATION – VARIANCE (VAA-3968)

I have attended many of the appeal hearings and submitted comments. Both Placer County and Gary Davis are responsible for errors made during this process. With that said, Staff brought forth a reasonable request for payment. It's time for the applicant to comply with the terms which have been greatly increased due to lack of requested payment. And Placer County processes must be re-evaluated and accountability mandated to insure this type of debacle doesn't happen again. Staff stated a \$20K check was being made available. \$30K is the required payment. *Respectfully, Staff must figure out a payment plan suitable to all. Not stated at public hearing: I believe the payment in full in any increments must be paid off within 24 months. This has gone on far too long! Take the \$ 20K and require the remaining \$10K be paid off monthly but not to exceed 24 months. And if not paid within 24 months, demolition required immediately which would be May 2020. This is a recommendation for June 14 hearing.*

Thirty (30) Day Payment Demand Letter

On February 9, 2018 Placer County Planning Services Division sent the Appellant, Gary Davis a letter via certified mail and electronic mail (Attachment C) summarizing the action of the Planning Commission from the December 14, 2017 hearing. The letter also informed the Appellant that, because there was no appeal filed of the Planning Commission's decision to deny the appeal and deny the variance modification that the conditions of approval remain in place. As such, staff requested in this letter payment of the outstanding amount of \$30,000 by March 16, 2018 to avoid the initiation of violation proceedings. To date, no payments have been made to the County.

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

The parking Variance (VAA-3968) approved on October 17, 2002 allowed for a reduction to the number of required parking spaces required for the expansion of the Gary Davis commercial building. Condition of Approval No. 4 required the Applicant, Gary Davis, to pay a fee of \$30,000 prior to Building Permit issuance for the expansion. The fee was never paid prior to construction of the addition. The Applicant's later request to modify the Variance to eliminate this condition was denied by the Zoning Administrator, subsequently appealed by the applicant, and the denial was upheld by the Planning Commission on December 14, 2017. The Applicant was provided a written demand for payment (Attachment C) due no later than March 16, 2018. As of the date of this staff report, no payment has been made by the Applicant.

Allowing the Applicant additional time to correct the violation is not a solution that staff can support as it likely will not result in compliance with the conditions of approval. A substantial amount of time has already been provided to resolve the violation with no progress having occurred. In addition to the fact that the payment should have been made to the County in 2004 with the building permit that allowed for the expanded use of his property, no progress has been made towards compliance between April 2015, when the Appellant was informed of the violation, and today. Staff cannot recommend that the Planning Commission pursue a modification of the conditions as a path to gain compliance. It is staff's position that this option to modify the conditions of approval was the subject of the modification proceeding. The subject has been explored by the initial hearing before the Zoning Administrator in 2017 as well as the several subsequent hearings before the Planning Commission. It is also important to note that Mr. Davis did not appeal the Planning Commission's decision to deny his request to modify this condition to the Board of Supervisors. It is staff's position that Mr. Davis does not have the right to a "second bite of the apple" to discuss modification again. Based on the above and the fact that Mr. Davis has failed to pay the \$30,000 required in Condition of Approval No.4, it is staff's position that there is no other alternative but to pursue revocation of the variance.

Revocation of Variance (VAA-3968)

The ordinance states that, in the absence of an appeal, the revocation shall become effective fourteen (14) days after the action of the Planning Commission. Upon the effective date of revocation, the code official shall initiate nuisance abatement proceedings by preparing and serving a notice of nuisance pursuant to Section 17.62.180(B), with the time limit for action by the permittee specified in the notice being that set by the hearing body in the revocation order. The ordinance further states that, when an approved land use permit has been revoked, no further development or use of the property authorized

Ellie Waller Comments for the Record Placer County Planning Commission May 24, 2018
Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola and Gary Davis Parking Permit Revocation *(with additional comments not made during public hearing on both agenda items)*

0190-6 cont'd, Other (O2)

0190-6
cont'd

by the revoked permit shall be continued, except pursuant to approval of a new land use permit and any other authorizations or permits required by Chapters 5, 8, 12, 15, 16, 17 of the County Code.



Should the Planning Commission revoke the Variance (VAA-3968), Mr. Davis will be required to return the project site to the conditions that were present at the time the variance was approved. This will require that Mr. Davis obtain the necessary building permits for the demolition and reconstruction to allow for the breezeway that was enclosed to be demolished (removal of the 594 square foot addition). In addition, two parking stalls would need to be constructed where they had previously been located. The timing of which shall occur as outlined under the "Permit Revocation - Variance (VAA-3968)" in staff's recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

The Development Review Committee recommends that the Planning Commission make the following findings and revoke the Variance (VAA-3968) as set forth below:

Findings

1. This matter is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15321 and Placer County Code Section 18.36.230 (Class 21- Enforcement Actions by Regulatory Agencies).
2. The property owner of record, Gary Davis (the "owner"), was given adequate and proper notice of the date, time and place of the hearing, and was given an opportunity to present testimony and evidence.
3. The owner was given adequate and proper notice of the condition alleged to be in violation of the Conditions of Approval, and was given a reasonable opportunity to resolve the violation and satisfy those conditions prior to the time of the revocation hearing. The owner was informed of the violation in April 2015 and has made no progress towards resolving the violation.
4. The owner applied for a modification of the Variance to eliminate Condition of Approval No. 4. The Zoning Administrator considered the request to modify the entitled Variance and denied that modification request. The owner appealed the decision of the Zoning Administrator to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission considered the appeal and denied the appeal and denied the request to modify the Conditions of Approval. The owner did not appeal the decision of the Planning Commission.
5. The owner was provided with a Thirty (30) Day Payment Demand Letter on February 9, 2018, via certified mail and electronic mail, which summarized the action of the Planning Commission, identified the owner had not appealed the denial, and requested the payment of \$30,000 prior to March 16, 2018. The owner did not comply with the order.
6. The property described above (the "property") is in violation of the County Code Section 17.58.140.B (Conditions of Approval) in that the owner has not provided payment in the amount of \$30,000 as required by Condition of Approval No. 4.
7. Providing additional time or opportunity for the owner to voluntarily comply, beyond the 30 days provided, would serve only to allow the violation to continue.



Permit Revocation – Variance (VAA-3968)

1. The owner shall apply for a building permit to demolish the 594 square foot addition within 60 days of the effective date of the Planning Commission's permit revocation action; and
2. The owner shall remove all improvements allowed for by the Variance (VAA-3968) within 180 days of the effective date of the Planning Commission's permit revocation action. The owner shall also contact the Placer County Planning Services and Building Divisions once the removal has been completed for inspection and building final. In the event that said action is not completed within 180 days of the effective date of the Planning Commissions permit revocation action, the County will commence Nuisance Abatement proceedings pursuant to Placer County Code Section 17.62.160.

0191

Will Hollo

From: David <dwwlaw@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2018 9:30 PM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: Support for squaw-alpine chairlift.

0191-1

I support the proposed Squaw-Alpine (base-to-base) chairlift. I feel it will help reduce traffic and related car exhaust and noise as well as enhance the attractiveness of Squaw Valley to out-of-state visitors (thereby increasing various tax revenues to Placer county such as transit occupancy tax and sales tax) which can be used for new bike paths, hiking trails, parks, etc. benefiting residents.

David Walters
201 Squaw Peak Road, no. 217
Olympic Valley, Ca
415 713/7670
Sent from my iPhone

0191-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

Shirlee Herrington

From: Rick Wertheim <volunteerrick@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 18, 2018 12:34 PM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: Comments on Squaw Valley - Alpine Meadows Gondola EIR

May 18, 2018

0192-1

This last year there were several gasex installed above Alpine Meadows road to control Avalanches. The explosions were extremely loud and scary. If I was outside walking my dog she would immediately run back home after an explosion. When inside the house she would hide in the deepest corner she could find and her whole body would shake for hours. Other dog owners I know confirm the same behavior with their dogs.

If this happens to dogs what happens to Bears, Coyotes, birds and tons of other wildlife in the forests.

I don't think this was properly discussed in the EIR. On the plans it looks like there may be as many as 8 new installations. These are all very close to Granite Chief Wilderness and the sound will be directed toward most of the homes in Alpine Meadows. I do not recall being able to comment on any of the installations above Alpine Meadows road or being warned about the extremely loud noise.

I realize the importance of Avalanche control. There must be a way to greatly reduce the noise levels of this equipment. Otherwise, an alternative like avalanche fencing must be used.

Rick Wertheim
 1491 Upper Bench Road
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0192-1, Noise (N)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

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Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 5/22/2018 9:02:28 AM

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Comments:

- 0193-1 | There is really only one reason to construct a gondola to connect Squaw Valley to Alpine Meadows. The reason is to create a Brand for marketing purposes. Basically a Brand that will lure more people to the area to fill the new rooms proposed for the expansion of the Village at Squaw Valley. A way to market Squaw Valley as a larger ski area to the world. It does not take a genius to figure out that more people mean more traffic and more impact to the surrounding area. More trash in the wilderness, more hikers on the trails, and just plain more people everywhere.
- 0193-2 | Of course the impact of larger numbers of skiers and snowboarders during the winter will overcrowd slopes that are already overcrowded, and in my opinion, dangerous during peak times. There is no doubt that the character of each area will change with the influx of larger numbers of winter sports enthusiasts. Where are these people supposed to ski or snowboard. At Alpine Meadows slopes are already overcrowded during weekends and holidays, especially when snow conditions are not optimal (as has been the case during the past few winters). Add thousands more to the lift capacity and the hill capacity arriving from Squaw Valley and you have a recipe for disaster. It has been bad enough over the last few winters with the somewhat limited use of buses to bring people from Squaw to Alpine when conditions at Squaw are not the best (low snow conditions with limited lift operations, high snow accumulations overnight, or high wind conditions with limited operations). Patrons are told to head to Alpine Meadows where more of the mountain is open, but Alpine also has limited operations on these days and thus the entire experience is nothing but an unhappy overcrowded mess (lines and more lines and more lines). Add people arriving via a gondola at 1800 per hour and you have a recipe for disaster.
- 0193-3 | When you attract more people to your resort which is the hope of the owner, then you automatically bring more traffic. Anyone who claims this is not true is just kidding themselves. If you claim more people will not show up, but just the same number as before, then you are dreaming.
- 0193-4 | If you claim that the gondola will not operate during the summer, then you are just lying. I can easily envision an argument in a few years, should the gondola be constructed, where the operator claims that operating just a section of the entire lift is not the same as operating the lift in the summer as originally approved. For example, Squaw Valley operates the gondola to the top of KT22 claiming it is not operating the entire lift and thus is not subject to the original agreement. Perhaps it is operated as a sightseeing opportunity for guests. Perhaps a restaurant is constructed at the top of the first terminal where guests can sit, eat, and view Lake Tahoe. Of course once that have arrived at the top of KT22, then why not take a short, easy walk to the famous Five Lakes Wilderness Area. It is certainly easier than hiking up from Squaw or Alpine. No matter what the applicant says, this will happen. By the way, how do you define summer. Does it include spring and fall?
- 0193-5 | Perhaps I should mention my disappointment with the applicants preferred location of the proposed gondola, but all of the proposed routes inflict pain with respect to the visual degradation of our mountainsides. Must we continue to infringe on what is left of our natural environment. Must I see steel towers, steel cables, and trash tossed out of gondola cars during the winter months when I am walking toward the wilderness? Is it important that we try to save the environment, just once, instead of continuing to infringe on it for the sake of profit?
- Development will never stop, but stopping it a few times is not going to ruin our economy.
Andy Wertheim

0193-1, Other (O2)

These issues are addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR in Sections 4.1, "Recreation," 4.3, "Wilderness," 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," and 5.2.3, "Growth-Inducing Impacts." No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0193-2, Recreation (R1)

These issues are addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR in Sections 4.1, "Recreation," and 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," and 5.2.3, "Growth-Inducing Impacts." No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted. The commenter's opinions and preferences will be reviewed and considered by the Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in rendering their decisions on the project.

0193-3, Other (O2)

These issues are addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR in Sections 4.1, "Recreation," and 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," and 5.2.3, "Growth-Inducing Impacts." Consistent with the comment, it is assumed in the EIS/EIR that the proposed project will generate increased resort visitation, and the environmental effects of this increased visitation are evaluated in the EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0193-4, Project Description (PD)

Proposed operation and long-term maintenance of the gondola is described on pages 2-13 and 2-14 of the Draft EIS/EIR. The project description identifies no summer time operation for the Gondola, and this commitment is reinforced through RPM MUL-4, which provides additional parameters for seasonal operation. These operational conditions will be reflected in the Forest Service special use permit (SUP) and the Placer County Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Any changes to the seasonal operations will require amendments to these permits and

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subsequent NEPA and CEQA review. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0193-5, Other (O2)

These issues are addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR in Sections 4.1, "Recreation," 4.2, "Visual Resources," 4.3, "Wilderness," and 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation." No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

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I submitted many of these comments originally and they were not responded to. I am submitting them again and expanding the comments. Please thoroughly respond.

0194-1

The applicant is not currently an adequate operator of public assets

This project centers around an extremely large capital investment into Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows by KSL Resorts and Squaw Valley Ski Holdings, LLC (KSL). Ironically, the scoping meeting on May 9th 2016 was the day after KSL prematurely closed Alpine Meadows for the season. Considering the snow pack, this is a historically early closing date. Adding to the irony, is the report of extremely high visitor numbers this season. This should have put KSL on financially solid operational footing. Additionally, KSL again sold a landmark number of season passes. Yet they seem unable or unwilling to provide the same level of service to the community that was historically provided by previous business operators. Similar to the early closing, KSL has a deferred opening schedule at Alpine Meadows. They also have reduced operations earlier than necessary and earlier than previous tenants have shown to do. This operational modality has continued during the following seasons. During the recent 2017/2018 winter Alpine Meadows was closed early again. Skiers were forced to ski upper mountain at Squaw Valley via the Funitel and when they finished their ski day they had to download the Funitel because there was not snow on lower mountain at Squaw Valley. However, for weeks following the closure of Alpine Meadows, it was still possible to ski top to bottom without downloading. The operators have demonstrated through actions that they do not desire to operate Alpine Meadows to its full capacity. Cost cutting measures seem to be prioritized at Alpine Meadows. Based on that, we must ask ourselves why would we impact the environment at all to provide more access to Alpine Meadows when the operators currently avoid with purpose, operating this facility at its highest level?

This discussion weighs into the business side of KSL. Applicants in this setting often will claim the business side is off limits. However, when public agencies are asked to approve public lands and assets for use by a commercial entity, the business aspects must be considered within the scope of the approval process since business decisions and policies clearly affect the impact, both good and bad to the public.

As illustrated above, KSL currently does not adequately operate the business. KSL's policies of limiting operations are an intentional business decision in order to limit costs. Additionally, it has been suggested that Alpine Meadows has been deprecated to a degree by KSL in order to drive more visitor traffic to the more amenity rich enterprise of Squaw Valley. Without a full examination of the policies and decision making of the applicant, it is hard to say exactly why they are unable to operate the facilities on par with previous tenants. Nevertheless, there are two clear possibilities. They are either choosing to limit operations in order to lower costs and magnify the visitor use of Squaw Valley over Alpine Meadows; or they are limiting operations because they are failing to run the business properly. Either way, they are providing a lesser utility to the users and community than previous tenants. This has not been examined appropriately by the EIS and I request that it be responded to.

The initial estimation of the investment for this project has been a minimum of 25 million dollars. This represents a very serious investment that will have undeniably large impacts on the business operations of the applicant. Yet, we must remember, that this only represents the initial investment. After the Gondola is built it must be operated and maintained. This will be a costly and ongoing expense. A question this discussion points

0194-1, Other (O2)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project, the quality of on-going operations, but does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

As part of the County's project approval process, the project applicant would be required to adhere to various conditions of approval that are monitored by the County through a variety of permit processes as listed below.

1. Development Review Committee
2. Improvements Plan Approval
3. Improvements Construction Inspection
4. Encroachment Permit
5. Final Map Recordation
6. Acceptance of Project as Complete
7. Building Permit Approval

Further, the project applicant would be required to implement RPMs and mitigation measures included in the project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Appendix I to the Final EIS/EIR). Responsibility for ensuring that required RPMs and mitigation measures are implemented rests with the Forest Service and Placer County.

0194-1 cont'd
 to is if KSL cannot currently operate the facilities on par with historical operations, than how would investing this much capital and saddling themselves with additional maintenance costs allow them to better operate the business? By all logic, this would likely lead to more limitations in operations. What is the estimated cost to run and maintain this new Gondola? These are key questions you must consider. Has the applicant been asked this question? Using public assets for commercial interests is a privilege. If KSL has not proved to be a good operator of their current public assets, then it would be a mistake to give them more public lands. Allowing the use of public lands comes with an express or inherent promise that the public lands are actually used and done so in a way that best serves the public. It has been shown that KSL have been a below average at best steward of this public asset. We should therefore not give them more. Please respond.

0194-2
Shuttle System
 The EIS is unclear in terms of what will happen to the shuttle system if an action alternative is selected. It clearly indicates that the shuttle system will continue if no action occurs. As part of the traffic analysis you reduce the traffic output with the idea that the Shuttle system will not run if the Gondola is operational. But I see no commitment to this in the individual alternatives. This plan would indicate that the applicant would still maintain all the infrastructure for the shuttle system and would simply not use it. That requires a great deal of investment and maintenance into infrastructure from buses, bus stops, drivers, etc to simply let it idle. Please clarify whether the applicant will run the shuttles or not while the gondola is present? Will we have unnecessary duplicity in transportation between the resorts if an Action plan is selected?

0194-3
Shuttle System is more dependable
 Roadway access to the ski resorts is a prerequisite to all operations of the ski resort. If the roads are accessible, then the current bus system can operate. Thereby, anytime users can access the ski resort, the Squaw-to-Alpine shuttle transportation system can operate. However, Gondola systems have more limitations. The roads must be cleared to even begin prepping the proposed Gondola for use. By this notion the bus system will always be ready to function before the Gondola. Additionally, wind and other weather factors will limit the Gondola opening. In many cases, wind conditions will not close the Gondola, but will force it to run slower. The Gondola also requires access by large snow machines to operate. This is no surprise. If you examine the operations of any ski resort, you will see that all lifts are limited by various environmental factors. Even if this simply means the lift has frequent delayed openings and early closings this still adds into the equation where the Gondola will never be able to function as well as the existing transportation system. How can we justify impacting the environment for a transportation system that can't completely justify removal of the existing transportation system? Please respond.

0194-4
Only 2.7% of visitors use shuttle system
 The EIS concluded that the shuttle system is only used by 2.7 % of guests because the shuttle system is inadequate. Could we not just as easily jump to the conclusion that guests don't actually want to travel between

0194-1 cont'd, Other (O2)

0194-2, Project Description (PD)

SVSH has indicated that they do not intend to operate the present shuttle system during times when the proposed gondola is in operation. Shuttle system infrastructure would be maintained with implementation of any of the action alternatives, for use during inclement weather that precludes operation of the gondola.

0194-3, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)

Section 2.3.2.1, "Improvements to Existing Shuttle System Alternative," in the Draft EIS/EIR evaluates a potential alternative to the project that would involve improving the existing shuttle system and expanding it to provide enhanced access between the ski resorts. See the Master Response above on the Improvements to Existing Shuttle System Alternative provided in Section 1.8, "Master Responses."

Wind closures would be implemented as necessary to ensure safe operation of the gondola. Further detail on this matter is beyond the scope of this analysis, as the specific operational procedures of the gondola would be determined pending Forest Service and Placer County approval of any of the action alternatives.

0194-4, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)

Section 2.3.2.1, "Improvements to Existing Shuttle System Alternative," in the Draft EIS/EIR evaluates a potential alternative to the project that would involve improving the existing shuttle system and expanding it to provide enhanced access between the ski resorts. See the Master Response above on the Improvements to Existing Shuttle System Alternative provided in Section 1.8, "Master Responses."

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0194-4 cont'd | two resorts? If we did support this conclusion then it would seem that this project should not be supported. Please explain how the former conclusion is more likely than the later?

Ski terrain

0194-5 | It must be noted that the proposed mid-stations would not result in a single acre of additional terrain. The applicant themselves stated this in the Q&A at the scoping meeting. Where is the benefit?

Mid-station ski access is negligible

0194-6 | The applicant may suggest that while there is no additional terrain, that there is a benefit because of additional access provided by the mid-stations. However, current operations suggest otherwise. On the Squaw Valley side, the mid-station will be somewhere on the KT22 ridge essentially adding an additional access point to the terrain serviced by KT22. However, there is already a second chair that accesses this terrain called Olympic Lady. Yet, KSL only operates this chair minimally. Olympic Lady operates less than 10% of the ski season and that is a generous estimate. If the applicant cannot rationalize operating this chair, why would they add a third access point to the same ski terrain?

On the Alpine Meadows side, the location of the mid-station will be in the vicinity of the Buttress ski terrain. This terrain is currently accessed by skiers through hiking. The hikable ski terrain at Alpine Meadows is culturally valued by the local community and visitors. Prior tenants even viewed it as a business positive, by using it as a marketing opportunity with slogans like "Take a walk at Alpine Meadows." In fact, across North America, Sidecountry skiing has become a most popular attraction. And how fitting is it that much of this sidecountry terrain is on forest service land. This seems to be a circumstance which the forest service and the county would want to preserve. Putting a mid-station lift here will ruin this skiing. KSL uses the slogan "The Soul of Skiing" to describe how they operate the ski resorts. I would advocate that the walk to the Buttress area represents exactly the soul of skiing. By this logic, the mid-station would result in the ski community losing culturally significant ski terrain.

Additionally, Squaw Valley both traditionally and currently has a practice of limiting highly advanced and hazardous terrain on weekends and during busy visitor times for safety reasons. For instance, the famed Palisades at Squaw Valley is closed most weekends. Many gates accessing Silverado terrain are also closed during weekends. This terrain is comparable to the Buttress and the Cathedral of Estelle Bowl. This terrain is currently naturally limited at Alpine Meadows because it requires a skier to endeavor in a significant hike to get there. The mid-station would remove all access barriers. Therefore, if KSL applies the same standard they currently apply, they will have to more frequently close this terrain for safety. This would mean the mid-station would result in less skiing, not more. Was the applicant queried regarding this? Please respond.

Lack of Beginner Terrain

0194-7 | One of the underlying premises of the project is to make more beginner terrain available to guests via Alpine Meadows. The mid-station option at Alpine Meadows drop skiers off at either expert terrain or terrain that is rarely skiable. Please respond.

0194-4 cont'd, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)

0194-5, Project Description (PD)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0194-6, Recreation (R1)

Please refer to the text within Impact 4.1-1 (Alt. 2) in the Final EIS/EIR, below sub-header "Ski Area Facilities and Recreation Experience," for a description of impacts that may occur to skiable terrain within *the Buttress* and *Bernie's Bowl* areas as a result of implementation of Alternative 2. While potential changes to the recreational experience of this terrain may occur with implementation of Alternative 2, these changes would not have the effect of altering the overall NEPA or CEQA effects conclusions as listed in Section 4.1, "Recreation." This is because the improved resort connectivity that would occur with construction of the gondola would be anticipated to outweigh these potential changes within *the Buttress* and *Bernie's Bowl* terrain.

The remainder of the comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0194-7, Alternatives (A)

The commenter is correct that the project would improve access to beginner terrain at Alpine Meadows, as discussed in Section 1.1 of the EIS/EIR. It is intended that the Squaw Valley ski and snowboard schools, and others utilizing the gondola to access beginner terrain at Alpine Meadows from Squaw

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Valley, would offload at the Alpine Meadows base terminal rather than the mid-station. The project does not imply that there is beginner terrain available from either of the mid-stations, but, rather there is comparatively more beginner terrain generally available at Alpine Meadows.

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0194-7
cont'd

Alternative 2 is predominantly expert terrain only. Has this been addressed?

Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 in particular does not have snow on it often. Has this been addressed?

0194-8

Operating mid-stations independently?

Why would we want the mid-stations to operate independently? As far as I can tell the driving impetus of this project, or at least the one presented, is to connect the two mountains. Why add the costs? In what scenarios would this be run in this format?

0194-9

Why no alternative without an Alpine Meadows mid-station?

The Alpine Meadows mid-station appears to provide limited skiing, very limited if no beginner skiing, requires adding a massive amount of Gasex infrastructure and likely snowcat grooming around it. This is a massive undertaking to give access to terrain that is not suitable for the type of guests the underlying basis for the proposal caters to. Why disturb all this earth and install all this infrastructure that is only necessary for this mid-station, when we won't be catering to the guests. Why is there no Alternative without an Alpine Meadows mid-station?

0194-10

Operating impact of Gondola

You must weigh the impact of not just building the gondola, but also operating it. Access and operations are dependent on snow machine access. Maybe the Gondola will be quiet, but this equipment is not. The equipment also operates on fuel. This should have been considered in the environmental impact study. There are no snow machines currently allowed on much of this terrain. I have heard arguments that the Gondola will be better on the environment because it uses cleaner energy than the buses and it will be quiet. This argument could be mitigated by investing in clean vehicle technology, but even outside of that, we must now consider that not only are we operating a Gondola in this terrain, but also noisy fuel guzzling snow machines including both groomers and snowmobiles. Please point me to where this was addressed in the EIS?

0194-11

Private Land Use

This development is contingent on partnership arrangements between Troy Caldwell and KSL. This relationship further complicates the situation. Each partner has different interests and plans. Partnerships fail or change. It is usually just a matter of time. In fact, since this proposal has been put forward KSL is now Alterra.

What happens to the Gondola when this partnership fails whether it does so in the near term or the long? What happens if KSL sells the property to another party and then the relationship between this new party and Troy Caldwell deteriorates? Please point me to where the EIS responded to this query?

At the very least, the investigation should have included a full inspection of the partnership agreement and rate it for sustainability and fail points. You must evaluate the degree that the legalese makes this agreement permanent because the construction of this project will certainly be difficult to undo and cause further impact if it must be reversed.

0194-7 cont'd, Alternatives (A)

0194-8, Project Description (PD)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0194-9, Alternatives (A)

The Alpine Meadows Mid-Station is described in Section 2.2.2 of the Final EIS/EIR. Both mid-stations are necessary to redirect the gondola (effect a turn in the alignment) to the base terminals. Additionally, both mid-stations are necessary to ensure independent operation of each side of the gondola; that is, the segment from the Alpine Meadows base terminal to the Alpine meadows mid-station could operate (powered by the Alpine Meadows base terminal) even if the Squaw Valley portion of the gondola were not operational. Passengers would be allowed to embark and disembark at this mid-station under Alternative 2 during the winter season. Under Alternatives 3 and 4, passengers would not be allowed to embark or disembark at this mid-station with the exception of the property owners and/or guests of the residences proposed to be built with the Caldwell property development.

0194-10, Project Description (PD)

The project description in Chapter 2 provides information related to long-term maintenance of proposed infrastructure. In particular, page 2-11 notes that for the Alpine Meadows mid-station, "Winter maintenance and emergency access would be provided to this facility over-the-snow using snowmobiles and snowcats along the same temporary construction access route identified in Exhibit 2-2."

Section 4.10, "Air Quality" includes discussion of emissions related to this component of the project. Emissions generated by maintenance activities, including off-road vehicles used to access gondola infrastructure, are discussed in Section 4.10.3 of the EIS/EIR. Maximum daily emissions would not exceed

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applicable PCAPCD thresholds of significance for any criteria air pollutant or ozone precursor and would not conflict with regional air quality planning efforts under any action alternative. Vehicle exhaust emissions associated with maintenance personnel during the off-season are discussed in Section 4.11.3 of the EIS/EIR.

However, the commenter is correct that noise impacts of these maintenance activities are not disclosed in the Draft EIS/EIR. Summertime maintenance would primarily involve operation of the gondola to move cabins and this activity is addressed in the noise section. Wintertime maintenance using over the snow vehicles would be infrequent and would involve using equipment that already operates in much of the project area as part of normal resort operations. These vehicles would not result in a new source of substantial noise. The Final EIS/EIR has been updated accordingly. Please refer to the discussion of Impact 4.9-3 in Section 4.9, "Noise" for further information.

0194-11, Other (O2)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project. See response to comment 0194-1, above, regarding conditions of project approval.

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- 0194-12 | **Caldwell has already shown to be a bad operator**
For many years now, we have stared at lift towers on Troy Caldwell's land that have sat vacant and idle. I object to starting another project on his property when he has failed to complete a similar prior project.
- 0194-13 | **Violation of the USFS objective to obtain private wilderness lands**
The USFS has a requirement that they acquire private lands inside the wilderness boundary. Part of the project goes through land that is private but designated as wilderness. Approving this project will forever end any attempt to acquire this land which is designated as wilderness. This seems like a very bad precedent to set for the sake of commercialization. Also, please reference the Private Land Use comment. If you were to consider approving such development of private wilderness land, I would think you do so only in the perfect situation. This partnership adds further risk to the situation. USFS, please respond?
- 0194-14 | **Pacific Crest Trail Impact**
This development is not just near any forest area, it will occur very near the PCT. Further development so closely adjacent to this iconic trail is a most serious impact. Is it worth sacrificing the sanctity of these iconic trails in order to enhance an already large resort?

The mid-stations will be giant structures. No matter how much attention is put into the look and feel, they will still be large structures permanently changing the skyline of the Sierra Crest.
- 0194-15 | **Gazex Avalanche Structures**
We currently have a functional avalanche management system for the Buttress area. Adding, physical buildings will be a year round eye sore at best. It may also impact the skiable terrain. Will the Buttress now have big pipes in the way of the ski lines?
- 0194-16 | **Will you be opening a pandora's box?**
If you approve the base-to-base gondola will you be enabling further development and impact? KSL and Troy Caldwell have both indicated that they are already planning additional projects in the area subsequent to this project. For instance, the Rollers lift. This is extremely concerning. Are you considering all this impact and how there will be a domino of development that follows this project if you approve? Please respond.
- 0194-17 | **Traffic**
The Action alternatives indicate significant and adverse impacts on traffic. North Lake Tahoe already experiences significantly adverse and challenging traffic conditions during ski season. The EIS says while traffic conditions would worsen, they would not reach a level where they would be considered unacceptable. We currently have stopped traffic on weekends. What exactly is the definition of unacceptable and how can adding to stopped traffic not be unacceptable?

0194-12, Other (O2)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project. See response to comment 0194-1, above, regarding conditions of project approval.

0194-13, Wilderness (W2)

The federal government has no requirement to acquire private lands inside a wilderness boundary; instead, as stated on page 4.3-5 of the Draft EIS/EIR, "the federal government *can* acquire private inholdings within the perimeter of a wilderness area *only with concurrence from the owner* or if the acquisition is specifically authorized by Congress (16 United States Code 1131-1136)" (emphasis added). It is further noted that the privately owned Caldwell property is not situated *within* a designated wilderness area -it is adjacent to the National Forest System-GCW. Please refer to the introductory portion of Section 4.3 for further clarification.

Impact 4.3-5: Effects on Potential Wilderness Characteristics on Private Lands within the Congressionally Mapped GCW provides analysis related to this issue. Please refer to page 4.3-13 of the Draft EIS/EIR for further information.

0194-14, Recreation (R1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0194-15, Project Description (PD)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex

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avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0194-16, Cumulative Effects (CE)

The Rollers lift is an unimplemented, planned chairlift (proposed as part of the Alpine Meadows Master Development Plan). Its bottom terminal would be near the Alpine Meadows mid-station under Alternative 2 (meaning that under Alternative 2, skiers could exit the gondola at the Alpine Meadows mid-station and get on the Rollers lift). The Rollers lift is included in the Draft EIS/EIR's list of cumulative projects (see Table 3-3 and Exhibit 3-1; see Alpine Meadows Master Development Plan, map label 1), as well as the White Wolf Project proposed by Troy Caldwell. Cumulative effects of the project in connection with other probable future projects (including the Rollers lift and White Wolf Project) are evaluated in Sections 4.1 through 4.17 in the Draft EIS/EIR.

Regarding the comment that project approval would result in a domino of development, see the discussion above about the cumulative impacts analysis provided in the Draft EIS/EIR. The probable future projects listed in Table 3-3 are in various states of approval/implementation. As described on page 3-10 of the Draft EIS/EIR, and in accordance with NEPA and CEQA, these projects:

are partially occupied or under construction, have received final discretionary approvals, have applications accepted as complete by Federal, state or local agencies and are currently undergoing environmental review, or are proposed projects that have been discussed publicly by an applicant or that otherwise become known to a local agency and have provided sufficient information about the project to allow at least a general analysis of environmental impacts.

Table 3-3 lists each project's approval/implementation status in a separate column. These projects are subject to consideration and review by the applicable lead agency. Depending on the circumstances of each application and the lead agency's ability to make the necessary findings in each case, projects may be approved or denied. Approval of the proposed gondola project would not indicate that other projects in the area would also be approved and implemented.

0194**0194-17, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)**

The comment, which relates to traffic conditions in North Lake Tahoe, requests a definition of how unacceptable traffic operations is determined and how adding to this condition should not be considered unacceptable. It also asks why more substantial mitigation measures, such as new roads, were not required.

Pages 4.7-5 through 4.7-10 describe the methods used to measure traffic operations including the use of level of service (LOS) to qualitatively describe system performance. The determination of whether a given operating conditions is acceptable or not is based on the standards of the jurisdictions that owns and operates that facility. Pages 4.7-15 through 4.7-17 describe the adopted (either in planning documents or route concept reports) standards used to determine each study facility's minimum acceptable operating conditions. For conditions that are already (or projected to be) at unacceptable levels, criteria are provided in these documents for the degree of worsening that should be considered significant. These criteria are listed on Pages 4.7-32 through 4.7-34. Page 4.7-34 also provides a narrative discussion of how a minor addition in traffic, if not noticeable to an average driver, is typically not considered significant. For example, according to Table 4.7-18, during the Saturday AM peak hour, the project would result in SR 89 south of Alpine Meadows Road experiencing an increase in two-way traffic from 979 to 1,013 vehicles. This three percent increase would translate into one additional vehicle every two minutes, which is not noticeable, given that the highway is currently serving an average of 18 vehicles per minute. With regard to new roads or roadway widening, right-of-way and environmental constraints preclude such opportunities (see page 4.7-15).

0194-17 cont'd | The planned mitigation measures appear to be minor. Lane closures and coning plans are currently in use, but have not satisfactorily improved the traffic problem. If we add more traffic from this project, I can't imagine how this methodology would suddenly work. Why is no major mitigation planned such as new roads?

0194-18 | **Conditions**
If the project is approved, I believe we need to apply restrictive conditions. Here are a couple conditions that would be appropriate to insure the proper use of these public assets:

1. Require proper use of the public lands
If KSL is confident it can afford an investment and ongoing expense of a new Gondola, then make the approval and any lease of public lands contingent on them properly using the public lands. The public is allowing this lease for a ski resort to operate. So, require just that. This can be done by requiring them to initially open and keep the ski resorts, both Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley, open for skiing when possible. There are very simply litmus tests that can be applied to enforce this such as snow pack measurements.

0194-19 | 2. Non-Transferable Condition
KSL is a developer. Developers are often essentially house flippers on a much larger scale. If you look at their business historically, they frequently invest in property, attempt to improve it and then sell it. For instance, shortly after they invested into Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows, they sold five previously acquired resorts to Omni Hotels for nearly a billion dollars. This Gondola project may simply be KSL improving the property in order to prepare it to be sold for a profit. In order to insure stability, I believe if you approve this project, you need to put a non-transferable condition on the lease so if they sell the business, the public can approve of the new owner.

The cost benefit equation

0194-20 | When doing an EIR you have to weigh benefits to the community and users versus the impact. In this case the benefits are slim. We gain no new skiable acreage. We are duplicating a transportation system that already exists. The benefits appear extremely small for the community and users. Therefore if you approve this, the impact must be tiny. The EIS has shown that various adverse effects will take place. Therefore this project should not be approved.

I advocate the No Action Alternative – Alternative 1 plan. Despite the extensive research, investment and studies completed, the alternative options with action are not suitable and create many negative impacts. I recommend that both the Forest Service and Placer County should deny this applicant.

If approved, this project will undeniable forever change the landscape of sierra crest. It will affect the everyday lives of the residents. It will have a lasting effect on the environment and community. I implore you to carefully examine the issues, both the environmental and community impacts. Please consider not just the impacts but also the benefits. The cost benefit equation must calculate in order to approve. You must weigh your decision with extreme prejudice because if this project commences, it is not something that can be undone.

0194-17 cont'd, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)

0194-18, Resources Protection Measures/Mitigation Measures (RPM/MM)

The Forest Service and Placer County will review and consider the environmental analysis as well as public comments received during the environmental process when making a decision regarding the project. As part of the County's project approval process, the project applicant would be required to adhere to various conditions of approval that are monitored by the County through a variety of permit processes as listed below.

Development Review Committee Improvements Plan Approval
Improvements Construction Inspection Encroachment Permit
Final Map Recordation Acceptance of Project as Complete
Building Permit Approval

Further, the project applicant would be required to implement RPMs and mitigation measures included in the project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Appendix I to the Final EIS/EIR). Responsibility for ensuring that required RPMs and mitigation measures are implemented rests with the Forest Service and Placer County.

0194-19, Resources Protection Measures/Mitigation Measures (RPM/MM)

The comment focuses on the project applicant and potential project profitability. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted. See response to comment 0194-18, above, for a discussion of the conditions of approval, RPMs, and mitigation measures that the applicant will be required to implement.

0194-20, Opinion (O1)

The comment is directed towards the project approval process and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. All comment letters submitted during the Draft EIS/EIR public review period will be reviewed and considered by the Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the

0194

Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors
before a decision on the project is rendered.

Shirlee Herrington

From: John Wilcox <jwilcox228@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2018 3:08 PM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: Base to Base Gondola EIR/EIS (Squaw Valley to Alpine Meadows)

0195-1

This is to express strong support for the proposed Gondola Project.

I have hiked the Five Lakes Trail at least 20 times in the past 25 years and am very familiar with all of the land that the proposed gondola would traverse regardless of which of the alternative routes is selected.

I have lived full time in Squaw Valley for 25 years and skied here for more than 50 years. I have also hiked many of the other trails in this region.

Those of us who choose to live in a major ski resort have chosen to live in an area with many ski lifts. Ski areas build and upgrade ski lifts regularly. There are already many lifts visible to hikers when hiking the Pacific Crest Trail in the Sugar Bowl, Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows ski resort areas. In fact, on the PCT today, you hike underneath long existing chairlifts at both Sugar Bowl and Squaw Valley.

Ski resorts occupy less than 0.1% of all the land in the Sierra Nevada mountain range and every winter are enjoyed by millions of visitors, most of whom are getting healthy exercise and having fun experiences in our beautiful mountain range. This usage dwarfs all the other visitor activities in the Sierras, yet impacts only a tiny portion of the vast mountain range.

The proposed gondola would be a wonderful addition to our little corner of the Sierra. It would eliminate the shuttle buses that presently run every 20 or 30 minutes between Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows and are heavily used. It would greatly add to the potential enjoyment of many of the skiers at the same time it eliminates many bus and car trips on already crowded roads. I personally would opt to use the gondola frequently if it was available.

Of the alternatives, I recommend Alternative #4 mainly because Alternatives #2 and #3 have the Squaw base station so close to Cushing Pond and Squaw Valley Lodge that it would impair skier traffic, obstruct views and require reconfiguration of Cushing Pond which is presently a very attractive area.

Sincerely,

John Wilcox

0195-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0196

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 6/5/2018 5:30:54 PM
 First name: carolyn
 Last name: willette
 Organization:
 Title:
 Official Representative/Member Indicator:
 Address1: box 5831
 Address2:
 City: tahoe city
 State: CA
 Province/Region:
 Zip/Postal Code: 96145
 Country: United States
 Email: carolyntahoe@sbcglobal.net
 Phone: 530 583 7369
 Comments:

0196-1

as a long time sQuaw Valley skier I believe this gondola is unnecessary and another blight on the environment. The Forest Service must act for preservation and not business interests. To say that the point of the gondola is to take the traffic off the road is laughable. It is only a marketing tool. The Granite Chief Wilderness, even if the gondola is outside of the boundary line, is home to a Forest Service "National Scenic Trail". How can we maintain a scenic trail with structures in the landscape? Is the Forest Service willing to give that up for a private business? I hope not. Towers maybe built by helicopters but trails will be made for ongoing maintenance. It will be a blight. Please watch the film "Resorting To Madness" which high lights the problems with winter resorts. The noise, the construction, the towers....please stop the madness and stick up for the environment and the local community. This is UNNECESSARY.
 Thank You Carolyn Willette

0196-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project. The comment states that "trails will be made for ongoing maintenance." This is incorrect. All roads/trails created for project construction will be restored to pre-project conditions. Maintenance will be conducted via crews riding "maintenance carts" on the gondola cable, over snow vehicles, existing roads, and rarely, by foot or ATV.

0197

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 5/25/2018 2:35:22 PM
First name: Marilyn
Last name: Willis
Organization:
Title:
Official Representative/Member Indicator:
Address1: 1330
Address2:
City: Alpine Meadows
State: CA
Province/Region:
Zip/Postal Code: 96146
Country: United States
Email: marilynwillis81@gmail.com
Phone: 530-320-8567
Comments:

I am writing today to vote for option 1 on the base to base gondola transport project between Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley. I have been a full time resident of Alpine Meadows since 1989. I enjoy looking out my window and seeing the beautiful pristine backside of Squaw Valley. We moved into the Valley because of the peace and quite the Valley has afforded us in summer as well as in the winter. Putting an additional permanent structure on National Forest Service Land is definitely not desirable. I am concerned about the Alpine Meadows base terminal disrupting the creek that runs through that area, as well as the impact that will affect the 5 Lakes Trail/Granite Chief Wilderness.

Marilyn Willis

0197-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0198

Shirlee Herrington

From: Russell Wirth <russellwirth@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 18, 2018 1:47 PM
To: comments@squawalpinegondola-eis.com; Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: R. Wirth: I Support CA Express Gondola

Dear USFS/Placer County:

0198-1

I support the California Express Gondola because this base-to-base connection will enhance the ski and snowboard experience with minimal adverse environmental impact. I've been a home owner in Truckee for the last 5 years and been enjoying various recreational activities across Yuba, Sierra, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras and Alpine Counties for the last 25 years.

Thank You,

Russell Wirth

Email: russellwirth@yahoo.com

Cell: 415-713-4806

0198-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

Shirlee Herrington

From: Robert Yoder <ryoder@truckeeinfo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 04, 2018 7:42 AM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: Squaw to Alpine Gondola

Hi

0199-1 | I am in favor of the original alignment.

I am of the opinion the original alignment is less visually obtrusive to hikers using the Five Lakes Trail. Being closer to the ridge is less visual than being further east over the White Wolf Basin. I am also in favor of the new Rollers Chair as proposed in the Alpine Meadows master plan. The original alignment works better for servicing the Rollers Chair.

The original alignment also does not require the realignment of the Red Dog chair and new base.

Robert Yoder

12291 Prosser Dam Rd
Truckee Ca
96161

0199-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0201

Eli Ilano, Forest Supervisor Tahoe National Forest

The Granite Chief Wilderness Property Line

0201-1

Due to a significant difference of opinion on the location of the property line between the eastern border of Granite Chief Wilderness (GCW) and the “White Wolf” property, I request the Forest Service to conduct a survey of this line as a mitigation measure for an on-going situation.

The EIR draft report states on page 204, under section 4.3.2.2, that “Alternative 2 would have no effect on the undeveloped quality of National Forest System-GCW lands” This isn’t credible when the gondola and the alpine mid-station are located within a 150 feet of GCW for more than 3000 feet. Helicopters will be flying low over GCW during construction, and skiers will be off-loading in the area of the “6th Lake” which is the headwaters of Five Lakes Creek. There has already been direct impact on GCW due to the establishment of a snowcat trail in the Five Lakes area that was done primarily as pre-publicity for the gondola proposal.

The EIR describes a “temporary” construction road to be established close to the wilderness border as a part of Alternative Two. It should be noted there are a number of areas of steep terrain that would block establishment of this road. This photo shows the summit south of the easternmost lake. The White Wolf property line is near the far left edge of the photo. (All un-credited photographs were taken by David Ziegler between June, 2015 and May, 2018)



0201-1, Wilderness (W2)

A prior land survey conducted by Andregg Geomatics was used as the basis for the creation of all exhibits shown in the Draft EIS/EIR, including any exhibits that show where the temporary construction access route would be located under Alternative 2. Additionally, accurate property boundaries are now delineated on the ground. This information was reviewed in the planning of the alternatives, and in the field as a portion of this analysis. Project implementation would occur in accordance with the land survey conducted by Andregg Geomatics in 2012. No infrastructure would be constructed within the National Forest System-GCW.

As such, analysis in the Draft EIS/EIR stating that action alternatives would have no impact on the undeveloped quality of the National Forest System-GCW lands is credible and accurate. No development would occur on National Forest System-GCW lands, and therefore, the undeveloped quality of these lands would not be altered in any way.

As stated on all relevant exhibits, the temporary construction access route (as mapped in the Draft EIS/EIR) is an approximate route. It would only be established where technologically feasible (i.e., it would avoid any very steep, impassable terrain) and would not occur on any portion of the National Forest System-GCW.

The next photo shows even steeper terrain farther to the south. The left foreground is GCW land while the right side is White Wolf property.

0201-1 cont'd, Wilderness (W2)



0201-1
cont'd

Since a road in this area isn't feasible, then why was it drawn without checking this in the field? Is there any precedent for a road in this area?

The "Interconnect" Snowcat Trail

This trail was the result of a "pilot study" announced in 2011 in a press release issued by Squaw Valley on December 2, 2011. This article by Inga Aksamit is no longer online. A copy is included.

"Big news regarding backcountry access between Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows" (Examiner.com)

"a pilot study will be conducted this winter to assess the feasibility of allowing backcountry access between Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows. Andy Wirth, CEO of both Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows, said, "*We will be working with closely with our partner, the United States Forest Service, to conduct the pilot study*" From the press release: "*The pilot project will include route selection, potential issues relating to backcountry access during in-bounds closures, search and rescue issues, and interface with private land and wilderness areas*"

0201

0201-1
cont'd

This led to the establishment of a snowcat trail/track that was supposed to be on White Wolf property in 2013. In addition, a number of private property signs were posted on the eastern side of this trail. Additional signs were posted in 2016.

<http://unofficialnetworks.com/2012/04/squawalpine-connect-open-time-tomorrow>
“Troy Caldwell, the owner of White Wolf, has groomed a cat track from the saddle of KT-22 up the ridge that drops into Alpine’s Bernie’s Bowl” **“These cat tracks are within the boundaries of White Wolf”**

<http://unofficialnetworks.com/2013/01/kt22-backcountry-gate-opens-unofficial-report>
“About 100 yards from the gate you hit a cat track that has kindly been constructed by Troy Caldwell”

<http://ski.curbed.com/2013/1/8/10287248/squaw-valley-opens-new-chapter-with-gate-to-alpine-meadows>
“While Caldwell has hopes to eventually develop his own ski resort on the property... he did more recently give **permission for backcountry access between Squaw and Alpine through his property**”

<http://unofficialalpine.com/?p=1036>
“A track has been groomed at the edge of the wilderness on private property that might make it easier to ski from Squaw to Alpine”

<http://unofficialalpine.com/?p=10362>
“The entire mountain is open including the Alpine Squaw interconnect which is more of a hike from Alpine to Squaw”

<https://www.facebook.com/WhiteWolfTahoe/photos/a.269884636427277.63127.251678994914508/401252223290517/?type=3&theater>
“it’s Squaw’s first backcountry gate and the first step towards connecting Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows”

<https://snowbrains.com/squaw-alpine-will-connect-within-2-5-years-exclusive-interview-with-white-wolf-owner-troy-caldwell/>
The photo at this link shows the snowcat track in 2013.

The line was surveyed in 2012.
<http://www.moonshineink.com/news/surveying-scandal-sierra>

“In 2012, following an agreement to lease part of White Wolf to Squaw Valley for the construction of a gondola to connect the two ski areas, Truckee-based surveyor Andregg Geomatics was contracted to establish the precise boundary lines of Caldwell’s property”

0201-1 cont'd, Wilderness (W2)

0201

0201-1
cont'd

Starting with the Alpine Meadows Master Plan all of the maps released in regards to the gondola have shown the line in the same location. This line shows that White Wolf owns a limited amount of land on the west side of the crest in the Five Lakes area. However, all the photos of the snowcat trail show it on the west side of the crest. While the trail hasn't been maintained since 2016, most of the private property signs are still posted and can be used to mark the location of the trail.

The following photos attempt to show the location of the property line in relation to the signs. The first photo looks to the north in the vicinity of the easternmost lake.



The second photo looks to the south.

0201-1 cont'd, Wilderness (W2)

0201



This photo looks towards the southwest corner of White Wolf.



In this area, there is no White Wolf land on the west side of the crest.

0201-1
cont'd

This collage shows the banner photo from www.facebook.com/WhiteWolfTahoe/ and a photo taken nearby in the summer, and a close up of the route, which is directly over the pond at the eastern edge of the easternmost "3rd Lake. In this area, the property line appears to be at least a 100 feet to the east.



This collage shows the western area of the second photo in this comment looking to the north. White Wolf only owns the top of the summit in these photos. The photo on the left is from <http://unofficialnetworks.com/2013/01/kt22-backcountry-gate-opens-unofficial-report>



0201-1 cont'd, Wilderness (W2)

02010201-1
cont'd

No matter how you look at this situation, there is probable cause that the signs are in Granite Chief Wilderness. Most of the trees in the path of the Alternative Two route have been tagged. If the private property signs were located on White Wolf land, the signs would be a short distance to the west of the tagged trees, but the signs are far to the west in every case. The signs are all located on the west side of the crest, but White Wolf doesn't own much land on the west side. Areas where the construction road is proposed are very steep granite, but photos of the snowcat trail show flatter terrain etc.

The private property signs create problems in regards to right of way especially in the area of the 3rd lake. The signs leave the impression that someone can't hike around the east side of this lake without trespassing. They also have a chilling effect on the public's right to access and inspection of the gondola route in this area. It's questionable that White Wolf can restrict hikers in the designated wilderness area due to the fact that most maps show it as part of GCW and most of the private property signs in this area appear to be posted on public lands.

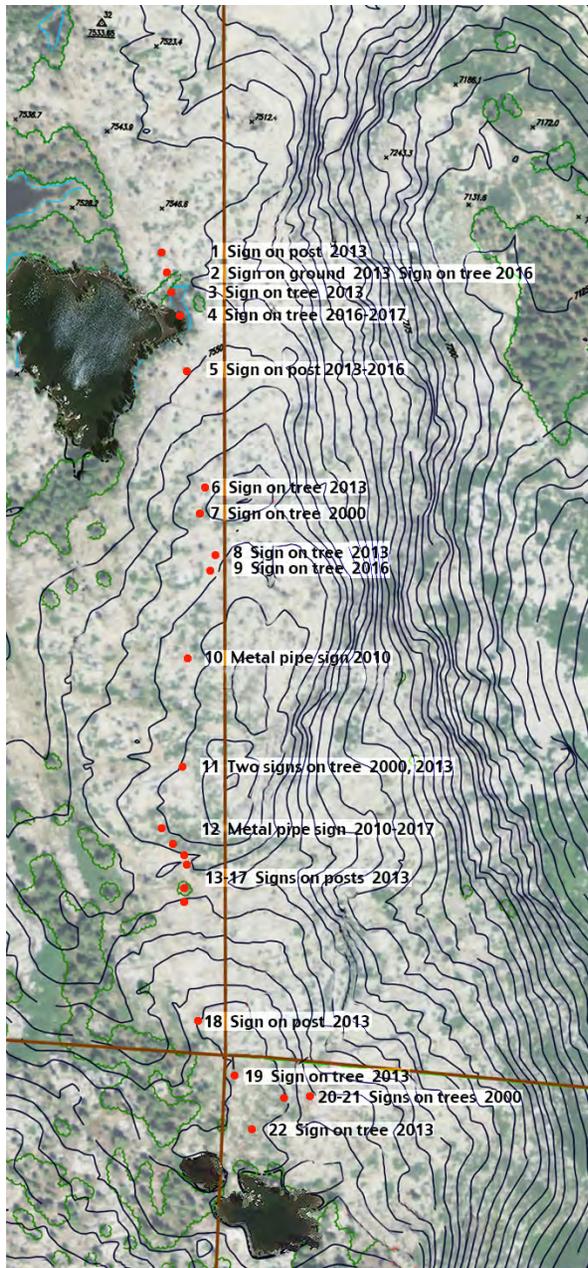
As a mitigation measure for an on-going situation in this area, I request the Forest Service survey the property line between Granite Chief Wilderness and White Wolf and take appropriate action in regards to this.

David Ziegler
130 Skylonda Dr
Woodside, CA 94062-3724

The following map shows the location of most of the private property signs in the Five Lakes area. Locations and the time frames are approximate. Most of the signs were posted in four stages:

Signs posted on trees prior to 2000
Signs fastened to metal pipes posted prior to 2010
Signs on wood posts and trees located on the eastern side of the snowcat trail in 2013
Signs posted on trees in 2016

0201-1 cont'd, Wilderness (W2)



0201

This collage contains most of the signs posted in the area in 2015.



<http://www.examiner.com/article/big-news-regarding-backcountry-a...>

LEISURE / TRAVEL / INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Big news regarding backcountry access between Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows December 3, 2011

9:14 PM MST.

Inga Aksmait

The best thing about the merger between **Squaw Valley** and **Alpine Meadows** could be the unprecedented expansion of backcountry territory between the two mountains, already a mega-resort at over 6,000 skiable acres. Always a distant hope among backcountry enthusiasts, this might become a real possibility. According to a press release issued by Squaw Valley on December 2, 2011 a pilot study will be conducted this winter to

assess the feasibility of allowing backcountry access between Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows.



Andy Wirth, CEO of both Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows, said, “We will be working with closely with our partner, the United States Forest Service, to conduct the pilot study. With the safety of our guests and our team members as our primary concern, we will be doing our due diligence to determine whether or not backcountry access between Squaw and Alpine Meadows is a possibility.”

The land ownership issues are complex, as Squaw Valley is privately owned while Alpine Meadows is located on National Forest Service land under a long-term lease agreement. Further complicating the issue is a large chunk of land (460 acres), known as **White Wolf Mountain**, owned by private citizen Troy Caldwell, that sits squarely between the parking lot at Alpine and the KT-22 lift at Squaw. Caldwell has been installing his own private lift in phases, under a hard-fought permit that is limited to friends and family. Many have speculated that this key lift, yet to be completed, could become part of the ski area operations, but this possibility was not addressed in the press release.

The terrain between the two mountains is rugged, but that hasn’t stopped

0201

skiers and boarders from pushing the limits, and the boundary lines, for years, mostly without incident but occasionally resulting in tragedy. In 2001 two teens, expert skiers who were nationally ranked, skied down from the KT-22 lift to Alpine Meadows via the West Gully and were buried in an avalanche, killing both. It was a stark reminder of the dangers of skiing in avalanche prone areas that are not controlled by bombing nor patrolled by experienced ski patrollers.

The press release indicated that if the pilot study is successful, skiers and riders with specialized backcountry training and equipment will be able to access the wilderness land connecting Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows. This probably means that skiers and riders would need to have some kind of backcountry training and carry **specialized equipment** such as avalanche beacons, probes and shovels. The pilot project will include route selection, potential issues relating to backcountry access during in-bounds closures, search and rescue issues, and interface with private land and wilderness areas. The goal of the pilot study will be to determine whether or not feasible locations for backcountry access gates exist – and if so, where the best locations would be in terms of topography and exposure. The pilot study will start this season when conditions warrant.

In the past, backcountry policies have differed significantly between the two mountains. Squaw Valley has maintained a strict closed boundary policy, only allowing limited access to the backcountry under controlled conditions, i.e. via Big Smoothie from the Granite Chief lift a few days every spring. Many passes have been pulled from Squaw Valley skiers and riders who flaunted the policy and ducked under the ropes. In contrast, Alpine Meadows, in keeping with the National Forest Service philosophy of allowing public access on public lands, has had an **open boundary policy**, allowing skiers and boarders liberal access to unpatrolled and uncontrolled terrain. After a fresh snowfall lines of people can be seen trudging over to Beaver and Estelle Bowls and Ward Peak to experience the exhilaration of making first tracks.

This pilot project is exciting news for backcountry enthusiasts, those who want to push the boundaries a bit and fans of the first-rate terrain of both mountains. Stay tuned for more information as the pilot progresses and, hopefully results in expanded access between the two mountains. In the

0201

meantime, in this first winter of merged operations, access between the two mountains will be provided via shuttle bus.



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Examiner.com

Inga Aksamit

SF Sierra Travel Examiner

0202

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 6/11/2018 4:59:36 PM
 First name: David
 Last name: Ziegler
 Organization:
 Title:
 Official Representative/Member Indicator:
 Address1:
 Address2:
 City:
 State:
 Province/Region:
 Zip/Postal Code:
 Country: United States
 Email:
 Phone:
 Comments:
 U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest

- 0202-1 | The I urge the Forest Service and Placer County to deny the gondola proposal. All of the routes proposed are too close to Granite Chief Wilderness to make sense with any long term planning perspective. There is a high possibility of failure and obsolescence due to economic concerns, storms and high winds from the west, and public indifference. Most of these issues are ignored or glossed over in the report.
- 0202-2 | The draft makes no mention of the geographical significance of the designated wilderness area. Aside from being a popular hiking destination, the Five Lakes basin is significant due to it being the only undeveloped pass over the Sierra crest in the Tahoe area that's not fully protected. For this reason alone, the gondola should be rejected. The gondola has little support from the local community especially from Alpine Meadows residents. This is reflected in the scoping comments and most social media sites.
- 0202-3 | All of the gondola alternatives are routed over the Alpine Meadows lodge. Alternatives 3 and 4 are routed over the Alpine Meadows road, the parking lot, the pedestrian entrance, and the lodge. This is clumsy, reckless, unprecedented, and a threat to public safety.
- 0202-4 | On page 123 the report quotes the Alpine Meadows General Plan: "All aspects of the vast, unique and outstanding physical beauty of the area must be consciously and continuously preserved" The gondola plan is in direct violation of this.

Summer Use
- 0202-5 | From Page 167: "Some cabins would need to be put on the line for limited periods during the summer (less than ten times during the summer for all cars placed on the line, and three to five days per month for a limited number of cars placed on the line) in order to perform maintenance" This means the gondola would be run during the summer up to 45 days during the off-season. None of the visual simulations reflect this. This will have detrimental effect for hikers on the Five lakes trail. On Page 930 there is this scoping comment by Daniel Heagerty: "The applicant states regularly and unequivocally that the gondola would only operate during ski season"
Operation is operation. it makes no difference if it's for winter sports or maintenance. The visual simulations don't show the effect of this.

Road in the designated wilderness
- 0202-6 | From Page 195 "In fact, 1,040 feet of a low standard native surface unimproved road runs through a section of these private lands within the congressionally mapped GCW and is frequently used by the property owner; this road occupies approximately 0.25 acre of the 54.6 acres of the Caldwell property that overlap with the congressionally mapped GCW" There is no visible evidence of this. While there's a road in the area, only a short section may be located in the designated wilderness.

Gazex exploders and helicopters in Alpine Meadows
- 0202-7 | The Gazex proposals in relation to the gondola is an obvious example of runaway mission creep. When the gondola was first announced in early 2015, there were no exploders in the plan. Six months later the exploders

0202-1, Other (O2)

Impacts to the Granite Chief Wilderness area are addressed in Section 4.3, "Wilderness," of the Draft EIS/EIR. Economic concerns are not related to the physical environmental effect under CEQA and need not be included in an EIR or other CEQA analysis. Under NEPA, however, socioeconomic effects are required to be addressed, and they are in Section 4.5, "Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice," of the Draft EIS/EIR.

Wind closures of the gondola would be implemented as necessary to ensure safe operation of the gondola. Further detail on this matter is beyond the scope of this analysis, as the specific operational procedures of the gondola would be determined pending Forest Service and Placer County approval of any of the action alternatives. Public sentiment towards the project is also not an environmental impact; however, public comments have been solicited during the environmental process as required by both NEPA and CEQA and this process is summarized in Chapter 6, "Consultation and Coordination," of the Draft EIS/EIR.

0202-2, Wilderness (W2)

Portions of the Five Lakes Basin (i.e., the Five Lakes within the National Forest System-GCW) are protected by the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. Considerable analysis in the Draft EIS/EIR is dedicated to discussion of the Five Lakes Basin (see Sections 4.1, "Recreation" and 4.3, "Wilderness").

0202-3, Project Description (PD)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0202-4, Visual Resources (VR)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content,

0202

analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

Furthermore, the Alpine Meadows General Plan contains no concrete standards

While this language does not establish any concrete standards that must be adhered to and instead offers recommendations for maintaining the quality of visual resources at the ski resort, it makes clear that maintenance of the area's stunning visual character is a priority for the managers of Alpine Meadows.

0202-5, Visual Resources (VR)

The 21 visual simulations created for each alternative allow for a qualitative analysis of the visual changes that are anticipated to occur with implementation of any of the action alternatives. These 21 visual simulations were created from a selection (16) of representative locations, which were initially selected from hundreds of viewpoints evaluated. Five of these (one site along Alpine Meadows Road, two sites at the Alpine Meadows base terminal, and two sites along Squaw Valley Road), experience widely varying conditions between the winter and summer months. They are also visible to a greater number of people traveling along the roads or from the base terminal. As a result, these five viewpoint locations were simulated during both winter and summer conditions, which resulted in the creation of a total of 21 visual simulations for each alternative. The objective of creating visual simulations is to characterize the appearance of the action alternatives if constructed, rather than to provide a comprehensive view of the project from all possible locations in the project area; therefore, not all locations could be, or were required to be, simulated for the purposes of this EIS/EIR. Instead, highly frequented or prominent public areas and visually sensitive vistas were selected for simulation. To account for the visual impacts that may occur outside of the immediate project area, a viewshed analysis of the regional visibility of the project was conducted. The viewshed analysis provides a quantitative assessment of the visual impacts associated with the project using the best available data at the time of analysis. The viewshed analysis accurately accounts for topographic features, but does not

0202

incorporate potentially obscuring features such as vegetation or built structures. It is expected that existing vegetative screening would have the effect of considerably reducing the overall potential visibility of the project, dependent on the specific location and vantage of the viewer. Because it does not take into account potentially obscuring features, the viewshed analysis is a conservative approximation of the Zone of Potential Visibility. For additional information, refer to Visual Resources Analysis Methods discussed in EIS/EIR section 4.2.2.

0202-6, Project Description (PD)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0202-7, Project Description (PD)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0202-7
cont'd

were added. Last year, installation for 9 more exploders in Alpine Meadows were initiated without warning. This is the result of a secret ad hoc process with no studies, reports, with no public input or notification. Because of this, the new Gazex "plan" should be considered as part of the gondola proposal. Common sense placement of Gazex exploders should be limited to high altitude locations on developed ski slopes that are miles away from residential areas. The four exploders being currently installed are at a low altitude between 7000-7500 feet and are within a half mile of homes in Alpine Meadows.

Installation of these exploders has been done at the expense of Bear Creek residents and visitors by using a helicopter flying low over the area. I witnessed and documented two of these flights. On 9/25/17 from about 4PM to 7PM a Skydance Helicopter N926JV flew concrete from the Alpine parking lot to the AM 4 location (on the SE Group map from Snowbrains) flying low over the Bear Creek Association residential area in possible violation of FAA and county noise regulations. There was no notification. This happened again on 5/29/18 with the same helicopter from about 10AM to 1PM. This was five days after Ron Cohen from SVSH and Troy Caldwell heard critical comments in regards to the exploders at the Placer County planning meeting first-hand. The message here is clear: The concerns of Alpine Meadows residents are to be ignored.

This is what should happen at this time:
Installation of AM Gazex 5 through 8 should stop immediately.
Helicopters should cease flying low over residential areas in Alpine Meadows unless there's an emergency.
The AM Gazex 1 through 4 should not be used again until an avalanche study is completed for Alpine Meadows. This was called for in the scoping comments by Daniel Heagerty. The study should include sonic and seismic testing of the Gazex exploders.
Gazex exploders should be removed from all gondola proposals. The only justification in regards to the gondola is stated on page 69:
"There would be risk of direct artillery and indirect shrapnel damaging new gondola infrastructure under Alternative 2 if current avalanche mitigation procedures continued in this area"
There only 3 exploders that are close enough to the Alt 2 route to be a factor in eliminating shrapnel. The rest are too far away or on a different slope.
The report admits that the Gazex exploders aren't necessary for the other routes. From page 72: "Although avalanche mitigation would not be affected by the modified location of the gondola under this alternative, Alpine Meadows nonetheless proposes?"
The reckless installation of Gazex exploders near residential areas indicates the lack of concern for the local community.
SVSH and Placer County should not be conducting an experiment into the effects of Gazex exploders in close proximity to Alpine Meadows residents.

<http://squawalpine.com/explore/blog/new-snow-safety-tools-technology>
<http://squawalpine.com/explore/blog/13-new-dragons>
<https://snowbrains.com/squaw-valley-invests-4-million-13-gazex-4-avalanchers-1-avy-helicopter-largest-ski-patrol-team-history-navy-seal-trainers/>
<https://kimkircher.com/2016/03/15/the-new-arrow-in-our-avalanche-control-quiver-gazex/>
"One Gazex explosion is the equivalent of 25 pounds of explosive in the air. Most of the explosives we use for avalanche control are 2 pounds"

The 2015 Eldora Decision

0202-8

This is in regards to the Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice section.
http://www.dailycamera.com/boulder-county-news/ci_28904349/eldora-expansion-us-forest-service
A news release from the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests stated. "The decision defers all expansion outside the existing ski area special-use boundaries, providing an opportunity for Eldora to work with interested parties on the more "controversial elements of the project" "I just felt like there was an opportunity for the stakeholders, the people who have an interest in Eldora ski area, to work together to come up with a refined proposal for expansion outside the existing boundary, before the Forest Service makes any decision regarding expansion," Archuleta said in an interview. Asked if there was a key factor that shaped Thursday's decision, Archuleta said, "The pivotal point was pretty simple. It was just a desire to see if there was an opportunity for some collaborative work on expansion."
http://www.dailycamera.com/news/ci_29185983/eldora-expansion-appeal-dismissed-but-ski-resort-still-has-options

0202-7 cont'd, Project Description (PD)

0202-8, Socioeconomics (S1)

It is noted that the majority of this comment references a ski area project analysis located in Boulder County, Colorado, the specifics of which are not germane to this analysis. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. Therefore, a specific response is not warranted. Section 1.6 of the Draft EIS/EIR provides a chronology and considerable detail regarding the public engagement process, which was conducted as a portion of this analysis and included opportunities for local property owners to consult and provide their thoughts on the project.

0202

0202-8
cont'd

0202-8 cont'd, Socioeconomics (S1)

Eldora's key complaint with the October ruling by the Forest Service is that while it OK'd a broad range of improvements within the resort's existing boundaries, it deferred a decision on two new high-speed lifts, one on its north side and one on the south that would necessitate boundary expansions of about 88 acres. The decision by then-acting Forest Supervisor Ron Archuleta also instructed Eldora to work "collaboratively" with its neighborhood critics to iron out issues associated with that proposed boundary adjustment. Mike Chiropoulos, a Boulder attorney representing the Middle Boulder Creek Coalition, has previously indicated a willingness to go to court to block expansion as Eldora envisions it. He welcomed dismissal of the resort's appeal. "Local governments and citizens breathe a sigh a relief over the dismissal of the appeal," he said in an email. "Regardless of where one comes down on expansion, nobody wants out-of-state corporations or big-city lawyers to have final say over what happens to our wildlife, watersheds, wilderness and communities." "The Forest Service decision was intended to balance a healthy environment with a healthy ski area," Chiropoulos said. "It made it clear that the path forward depends on collaboration. The resort's response speaks for itself."

http://www.dailycamera.com/opinion/ci_29219592/editorial:-eldora-must-work-for-what-it-wants

"Essentially, the federal agency said it wasn't going to play arbitrator to parties who have had little if any substantive discussion among themselves. The ski area, we think it fair to say, has done a poor job of outreach going back years, although it did hold a series of public meetings in putting together the expansion plan. As a result of the historic neglect, it has limited residual support and a fair amount of latent hostility from some area communities and environmental organizations. The agency's October decision contradicted the earlier draft, deferring the expansion and urging the parties to get together and work out their differences. The ski area's all-or-nothing position on improvements is untenable, unnecessary and, frankly, a flashback to the imperious attitude that left it with so little community goodwill in the first place"

<http://www.5280.com/travelandoutdoors/magazine/2014/10/expanding-interests> Eldora is notorious for "wind hold" situations that can shut down lift access to more than half the mountain. Spent says the proposed Placer chair wouldn't be as affected by high winds, but a planned wind-speed study by the Forest Service was never done. Marcia Gilles, spokesperson for the Forest Service, says the Forest Service determined the study wasn't necessary, but it reserves the right to change its mind if expert reviews of the DEIS or public comments suggest otherwise. The Eldora DEIS was written by the SE Group, a development consulting firm that specializes in resort communities, which also wrote Eldora's 2011 master plan. Gilles says federal regulations expressly permit contractors to work for both sides. The DEIS says SE Group filed a disclosure stating it has no stake in the outcome of the project, and "no conflict of interest exists."

This decision sets precedent in this situation because the gondola plan has been imposed on the Alpine Meadows community with little public consultation from local property owners. An indication that SVSH has no interest in input or dialogue is their repeated use of "inevitability" rhetoric in regards to the gondola. This includes statements from Andy Wirth and employees, (tram operators) a banner on an example gondola car in front of the tram, (Coming Soon) and numerous statements in on their website, Squaw Magazine and social media. The Forest Service and Placer County should heed these words of warning from Andy Wirth: "Our industry is littered with lifts that shouldn't be there" There's no better example of this than the Squaw-Alpine gondola.

David Ziegler
130 Skylonda Dr
Woodside, CA 94062-3724

COUNTY OF PLACER
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

ITEM 1

SQUAW VALLEY / ALPINE MEADOWS BASE-TO-BASE
GONDOLA DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

THURSDAY, MAY 24, 2018

10:00 A.M.

NORTH TAHOE EVENT CENTER
8313 NORTH LAKE BOULEVARD
KINGS BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Reported by: Kathryn S. Swank, CSR 13061, RPR

Public Meeting

1	A P P E A R A N C E S
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3	PLANNING COMMISSION
4	Wayne Nader, Chairman
5	Anders Hauge
6	Richard Johnson
7	Jeffrey Moss
8	Richard Roccucci
9	Larry Sevison
10	
11	COUNTY STAFF
12	Heather Beckman
13	Leigh Chavez
14	Sue Colbert
15	Stephanie Holloway
16	E.J. Ivaldi
17	Karen Schwab
18	
19	OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE
20	Eli Ilano, Tahoe National Forest Service
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	

1	A P P E A R A N C E S C O N I T I N U E D
2	P U B L I C P A R T I C I P A N T S
3	Mark Calhoun
4	Ron Cohen
5	Mary Coolidge
6	Craig Hamilton
7	Greg Parrott
8	Chase Schweitzer
9	Jeff Shellito
10	Melissa Siig
11	Ellie Waller
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Public Meeting

1	I N D E X	
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1 Thursday, May 24, 2018, 10:10 a.m.
2 Kings Beach, California
3 ---o0o---
4 (Previous items were held but not
5 reported by the Certified Shorthand
6 Reporter.)
7 ---o0o---
8 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Now we'll move to our first
9 item. As I have said, just again, if you want to
10 speak -- I didn't see anybody jump up, so I'm assuming
11 that everybody who would like to speak on this item
12 later has already signed up, so that's good.
13 So we'll move on.
14 Heather?
15 MS. BECKMAN: Thank you. Good morning. I'm
16 Heather Beckman. I'm a senior planner with the Planning
17 Services Division up here in Tahoe City.
18 And I'm here today to introduce the Squaw
19 Valley/Alpine Meadows base-to-base gondola project to
20 you.
21 The Draft EIS/EIR is out to the public; it's in
22 the 45-day comment period. And so we're here today to
23 receive oral comment on the document.
24 Before I get into the project itself, I would
25 like to point out that because the project site crosses

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Public Meeting

1 both private lands, which require the state CEQA
2 environmental review process, and federal lands managed
3 by the Forest Service, which require the NEPA
4 environmental review process -- because of the dual
5 processes, early on, the County and the Forest Service
6 decided to partner and issue a joint EIS/EIR to serve
7 our environmental review needs.

8 So on this slide, I would just like to briefly
9 walk through the decision makers and the project team.

10 So when we get to the Final EIS/EIR, I will be
11 coming back to your Planning Commission, and you will be
12 a recommending body on the adequacy of the environmental
13 document, as well as the entitlements. The Board of
14 Supervisors are ultimately the decision maker for this
15 project in terms of the CEQA and the entitlements.

16 On the Forest Service side of things: Mr. Eli
17 Ilano, who is seated at the table over here. He's the
18 Tahoe National Forest supervisor, and he's the sole
19 decision maker from the NEPA side of things. So he's
20 here today, much like your commission, to hear the oral
21 public comment on the document.

22 I also have other Forest Service staff with me
23 here today: So I have Joanne Roubique sitting in the
24 front row; she's the Truckee district ranger. I have
25 Joe Flannery; he is the winter sports specialist and

1 he's my counterpart in processing this document.

2 I also have some of our consultants here. So
3 from the EIR consultant team, with Ascent Environmental,
4 I have Sean Bechta; and then not listed on the slide is
5 Gary Jacobs.

6 And then from the EIS consultant team, SE
7 Group, I have Will Hollo.

8 So as is required by both NEPA and CEQA, when
9 we release the draft environmental document, we have to
10 notify the public of its availability and the comment
11 period. So we did the typical noticing for this
12 project, so property owners within 300 feet. We placed
13 notices in various newspapers, including the "Truckee
14 Sun," any persons or organizations who previously asked
15 to be notified were done so, as well as state, federal,
16 local agencies and jurisdictions.

17 This slide is just to give you -- to orient you
18 as to where the project is located. So, again, it's the
19 Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows Ski Resorts. And the
20 gondola crosses the ridgeline between the resorts. The
21 project area is located southwest of the town of Truckee
22 and west of Tahoe City.

23 So on this slide, I would like to briefly go
24 through the entitlements as it relates to the Placer
25 County process.

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1 This project will require a General Plan
2 Amendment to the Squaw Valley General Plan, and,
3 essentially, it's just to add that lift line alignment
4 to the potential future ski lifts map, which is a map
5 that's in the General Plan.

6 There's also a requirement for a small rezone
7 at the Alpine Meadows base area. And so I would like to
8 walk you through the zoning on this figure.

9 So starting at the top of the figure, in Squaw
10 Valley, we're in Forest Recreation Zoning District.
11 Then as we work our way up to the ridgeline, we -- in
12 the brown, we get into the open space. And ski
13 facilities are allowed, by right, in both forest
14 recreation and the open space.

15 When we get to the alpine terminal, in this
16 light yellow polygon, that's what's zoned neighborhood
17 commercial. Neighborhood commercial is really intended
18 to support the base facilities and amenities to the
19 lodge, the restaurant, the retail. So we're seeking a
20 small shift, if you will, in boundary between
21 neighborhood commercial and open space to allow for the
22 proposed terminal.

23 So in terms of the project, what does it do?
24 So as stated by the applicant, one of the project goals,
25 one of the main goals, is to provide for aerial

1 transportation between the two resorts. So the gondola
2 would operate in the wintertime, or ski season, only.
3 And when it is operating, the current shuttle bus that
4 runs between the two resorts would not operate.

5 Each gondola cabin can hold up to eight people.
6 The gondola itself could transport 1400 people per hour
7 in each direction, and the travel time is about 16
8 minutes.

9 In addition to the gondola, below the Alpine
10 Meadows Mid-Station, these blue triangles you see are
11 eight Gazex avalanche exploders. So this area is
12 already part of Alpine's Avalanche Mitigation Program.
13 They are proposing an upgrade to those exploders. They
14 use a combination of propane and oxygen gas, which can
15 be remotely ignited, resulting in a concussive blow,
16 which triggers the avalanche.

17 So here, I just wanted to show you some
18 examples of what the infrastructure might look like. So
19 on the top photo -- my pointer is not working. There it
20 is. Top photo: That's an example terminal. So it has
21 a 24- by 84-foot footprint. It's about 30 feet tall.

22 I show you this -- the colors and materials of
23 the terminals have yet to be determined. If this
24 project were approved those -- the colors, materials,
25 the look and feel, would be further vetted and reviewed

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1 through the Forest Service and Placer County Design
2 Review Process. But this gives you an example of the
3 size, mass, and height of the terminal.

4 And then the bottom photo is just an example of
5 a lift tower.

6 And then here are some examples of what the
7 Gazex exploders look like. So on the left-hand side,
8 this is where the actual gas would be ignited and the
9 concussive blow would come from, and these shelters
10 actually house the gas.

11 So now I would like to get into the actual
12 proposed project alignment and gondola alignment.

13 The proposed action or alignment from the --
14 provided by the applicant is referred to as Alternative
15 2.

16 We do have an Alternative 1; both CEQA and NEPA
17 require that no action or no project alternative be
18 analyzed. So that is our Alternative 1.

19 Alternative 2, again, is what's proposed by the
20 applicant. So I would like to walk you through where
21 the infrastructure would be located.

22 So, again, at the top of the figure, in Squaw
23 Valley, there's a terminal proposed to be located
24 between Lake Cushing and the KT Sundeck, and this is on
25 private lands owned by Squaw Valley Ski Holdings.

1 As we move up the gondola alignment, we get to
2 the Squaw Valley Mid-Station, and that's located in the
3 KT Saddle or near Skunk Rock. We're still on private
4 lands here, but we have now entered private lands owned
5 by Mr. Troy Caldwell. The gondola then traverses along
6 the ridgeline to the Alpine Meadows Mid-Station, and
7 that's where we enter Forest Service lands. And then
8 down from Alpine Meadows Mid-Station into the alpine
9 base area, still in Forest Service lands there.

10 I do want to point out that the gondola does
11 not open any new terrain. It provides better access to
12 existing terrain.

13 So specifically, the gondola is intended to
14 operate in a segmented fashion. So, for example, if the
15 whole gondola were on wind or weather hold, the
16 segments -- so Squaw -- Squaw terminal to Squaw
17 Mid-Station/Alpine Terminal to Alpine Mid-Station, they
18 can run independent of each other and of the whole
19 gondola. So they can essentially act as their own ski
20 lift. And in Alternative 2, skiers can load and unload
21 at these mid-stations.

22 So now I would like to talk about how our
23 alternatives were developed, and I will show you the
24 alternatives on the next slide. Both CEQA and NEPA
25 require that we study a range of alternatives. For

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1 CEQA, we're really looking at a range of alternatives
2 that achieve the project goals, as well as to minimize
3 or lessen environmental impacts.

4 From the NEPA side of things, the alternatives
5 are really driven by comments we received during the
6 scoping process. So, as you know, when a project
7 application comes in, the agencies enter a formal
8 scoping process where we present the project to the
9 public and we solicit their feedback and their comments.

10 And when we went to scoping for this project,
11 three key areas emerged that helped us formulate what
12 our alternative alignments would look like.

13 So the first was proximity to Granite Chief
14 Wilderness. So what you see on the left-hand side, here
15 in dark green, are the federally designated and
16 protected Granite Chief Wilderness area. So it's where
17 the Five Lakes are that you may be familiar with. So
18 this is a very special land designation. These lands
19 are meant to be kept in their natural and pristine
20 state, and very little to no development may occur. So
21 the concern was the near proximity of Alternative 2 to
22 the wilderness area.

23 Secondly was the issue of the state and
24 federally threatened and endangered Sierra Nevada yellow
25 legged frog. Shortly before this application was

1 submitted, the frog was listed as a species. So we knew
2 there was a concern and we knew it was in the region
3 generally, but did not know where specifically, nor did
4 we know the critical habitat mapping.

5 About a year after the applicant submitted
6 their application in this alignment, the U.S. Fish and
7 Wildlife Service released their critical habitat
8 mapping, and we found that Alternative 2 is fully within
9 the frog critical habitat.

10 Furthermore, during our initial field studies,
11 we found, in Bartstool Lake, so a lake adjacent to the
12 Alpine Meadows Mid-Station, a frog was actually found,
13 so then we also occupied habitat.

14 And then, finally, there was a concern about
15 the visual impact. The gondola alignment traverses
16 quite a length of ridgeline between the two resorts and,
17 therefore, has -- is highly visible, both from Granite
18 Chief Wilderness, as well as other viewing points and
19 roadways in the area.

20 So with those comments and those three topical
21 areas in mind, the Forest Service and County developed
22 two action alternatives to analyze; so Alternatives 3
23 and 4.

24 And I do want to point out something unique
25 about this project as it relates to CEQA practitioners.

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1 The NEPA process requires that all alternatives have an
2 equal level of analysis. So in this case, Alternatives
3 2, 3, and 4 have been designed, engineered, field
4 studies conducts, and the data analyzed to an equal
5 level. So that means, our decision makers can approve,
6 condition, or deny any of the three alternatives.

7 As you know, what we typically see in CEQA,
8 only the proposed alternative -- in this case,
9 Alternative 2 -- has the full level of analysis and the
10 other alternatives have a lesser degree of analysis.

11 So I think that's a really unique opportunity
12 that we have for our decision makers in this project.

13 So what do our alternatives do to address some
14 of the environmental impacts? As you see -- so
15 alternative -- I really am just having a hard time with
16 this pointer.

17 Alternative 3 starts in the same area --
18 terminal location as Alternative 2, same mid-station
19 then moves eastward, more interior, into the Caldwell
20 property, and down into Alpine Meadows.

21 Alternative 4 has a different term base station
22 in Squaw Valley, different Squaw mid-station, and then,
23 again, down into Alpine Meadows.

24 So Alternatives 3 and 4 move farther east, so
25 they are farther away from the Granite Chief Wilderness.

1 They are more to the periphery of the frog critical
2 habitat. They are farther away from the occupied
3 habitat. And in both cases, for Alternatives 3 and 4,
4 they actually dive down into what we refer to as Catch
5 Valley. So it's a valley more interior on the Caldwell
6 property. And because it's in that valley, it's less
7 visible from Granite Chief Wilderness and the topography
8 just blocks the visibility of these alignments more so
9 than we see in Alternative 2.

10 So part of our CEQA analysis at the Draft EIR
11 level, we are required to identify an environmentally
12 superior alternative, so the alternative with the least
13 collective amount of impacts.

14 In this case, Alternative 1, the no action, no
15 project alternative, had the least environmental
16 impacts; there were no environmental impacts.

17 So then CEQA requires that we identify the
18 environmentally superior alternative amongst the action
19 alternative. So alternatives 2, 3, and 4 in this case.

20 So what our analysis found is that Alternative
21 2 actually has the greatest impact, again, due to
22 proximity to wilderness, the visual of the frog.
23 Alternatives 3 and 4 have less of an impact. And
24 although they were very close to one another,
25 Alternative 4 came out as the superior alternative.

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Public Meeting

1 So before I get into discussion of the
2 environmental impacts I want to give a little bit more
3 context about the project, specifically as it relates to
4 skier visitation. When this project came in, the
5 project team -- the County, the Forest Service, our
6 consultants -- we immediately asked the question, does
7 this gondola service an attraction, drawing more skiers
8 to the resorts? Or is it an amenity? Is it simply that
9 aerial bus transportation between the resorts? And we
10 found that it's both, but it's more so the amenity or
11 transportation, so I will walk you through that.

12 First, however, I would like to define what a
13 skier visit. So if I were to ski ten times in one
14 season, that would constitute ten skier visits. And
15 what the regional and national ski industry data has
16 seen is that, over the last 20 years, the skier visit
17 market hasn't changed; it's remained static. And that's
18 nationally -- regionally and nationally.

19 So resorts, they are really vying to maintain
20 their market share or, if possible, to grow it a little.

21 And so then, that begs the question, what
22 drives the skier visits? How are we getting people on
23 the mountain?

24 And so, again, after decades and decades and
25 decades of ski industry analysis and resort operations,

1 what the industry has found that, first and foremost,
2 what gets skiers to the mountains is the snow
3 conditions. So the better or the more the snow, the
4 more skiers we're seeing.

5 Secondary, even tertiary to that, we're seeing
6 that it's resort capacity. So what kind of terrain do
7 they have? What kind of lifts do they have? What
8 amenities, restaurants, retail? What are the ticket
9 pricings and accommodations? Those also feed into skier
10 visits but to a lesser degree.

11 And then it's also the capital improvement
12 projects. So when a resort installs a new lift, a new
13 terrain park, or a new gondola, there is often a market
14 curiosity factor. And as a skier says, oh, gosh, I want
15 to try that out and see what that can offer for me. And
16 so what the industry has found, that with a new capital
17 improvement, they will often see a little bump in skier
18 visitation. It tends to flatten and then decline pretty
19 rapidly thereafter.

20 So we did commission a Skier Visitation
21 Analysis for the gondola project. We used several
22 experts in the industry. They analyzed the last ten
23 years of skier visitation data at both Squaw and Alpine
24 to establish a baseline. They also compared our
25 projects to other projects nationally and regionally to

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1 see if there might be some sort of correlation.

2 But, ultimately, what they determined was that
3 we -- with the implementation of the gondola, there will
4 be a nominal increase in skier visits, so about a 1.4
5 percent increase in the first year. And that would
6 result in 12,400 skier visits in the first year after
7 construction.

8 Then we would see the diminishing returns, as
9 we expect. By the end of year five, there would be a
10 zero percent increase. And adding all the skier --
11 additional skier visits by the end of year five, it
12 would be a grand total of 36,856 skier visits, added up,
13 aggregated over those five years.

14 So I would like to translate what this means
15 into a traffic impact, because not only do we analyze
16 traffic, but that also informs other environmental
17 impact areas we look at.

18 So these -- the increase in skier visits, on a
19 busier Saturday, it could result in an approximate 422
20 increase in terms of daily vehicle trips. So 211 trips
21 are coming into the resorts in the morning 211 going out
22 in the afternoon. A busier Sunday, we might see 432
23 trips; and, again, half in the morning, half out in the
24 afternoon.

25 So now I just want to touch on the use of

1 resource protection measures. It's a little bit new
2 nomenclature for the County CEQA documents. You can see
3 that these resource protection measures, or RPMs,
4 essentially, they are county mitigation measures; they
5 are one and the same.

6 As part of Tahoe National Forest NEPA process,
7 they use resource protection measures, or RPMs. They
8 are front-loaded into the project description. All of
9 the RPMs will be -- will become County CEQA mitigation
10 measures. So essentially, they are the typical
11 construction and operation requirements you would expect
12 on any project, and the intent is to avoid or minimize
13 environmental impact.

14 So construction RPMs would be requirements for
15 erosion control measures, requirements for improvement
16 plans; and in the case of this project, constructing in
17 one season.

18 On the operational side of things, it would be
19 the requirements to operate in the wintertime only. We
20 have hours that the gondola can operate, and we also
21 have information that determines who, what, how, and
22 when people can load and unload from the mid-stations.

23 So now I would like to get into the
24 environmental impact. So as you know, in the CEQA
25 process, we have to look at, when the project is

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1 implemented, will it have an impact on the environment?
2 And if so, does it cross a certain threshold to be
3 determined significant?

4 So the left-hand column are those impact areas
5 that we studied. We studied 17 in total. The left hand
6 column are those areas that were determined to have a
7 less than significant impact even before the
8 implementation of RPM and mitigations. So that's true
9 for air quality, greenhouse gases, utilities, public
10 safety, recreation, and botany.

11 The right-hand column are those areas that with
12 implementation of the project, we saw that there might
13 be a significant or potentially significant impact. We
14 then applied the RPMs and mitigation measures, and the
15 impact was reduced to less than significant. So that
16 was the case for land use vegetation, wildlife aquatics,
17 wetlands, geology, and soils.

18 There were three areas where there were
19 significant and unavoidable impacts. So that means, we
20 applied the RPMs and mitigation measures, and the
21 impacts were still significant and, therefore,
22 unavoidable. And that was the case for visual
23 resources, noise, transportation, and circulation.

24 And so I would like to get into those three
25 areas in my next few slides.

1 So for visual resources, the impact area of
2 concern was visual character. So the visual character
3 is, really, what's the lay of the land of the project
4 site today? And so, for the gondola, we actually have
5 two visual character areas: So one are the developed
6 areas, where we see the base lodges and ski
7 infrastructure today. We install the gondola there.
8 And it's what we might expect to see and there would be
9 no contrast to the existing visual character.

10 The other visual character we have on our
11 project site are the exposed and undeveloped ridgelines
12 and the sparsely vegetated hill slopes. Installing the
13 gondola in those areas would be a contrast to what we
14 see today, a contrast to the visual character.

15 The mitigation measures we would apply, the
16 Placer County and the Forest Service both have design
17 review processes. Through these processes, we look at
18 the colors, materials, lighting, reflectivity of the
19 infrastructure. And we would be looking to have them
20 blend with the natural environment as much as possible.
21 In some cases, there might be screening, landscaping
22 requirements to revegetate disturbed areas. But despite
23 those mitigation measures, there would still be a
24 significant and unavoidable impact.

25 The table on the bottom of the slide gives you

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1 a comparison amongst the three alternatives in terms of
2 the ranking of the impact. So Alternative 2, because
3 it's closest to the wilderness area, and because it has
4 the greatest length traversing across the ridgeline,
5 would have the greatest visual impact and contrast to
6 the visual character.

7 Alternatives 3 and 4, as you may recall, dive
8 down into Catch Valley. So because of the topographic
9 shielding of the gondola, there's less of an impact.
10 Alternative 3 goes lowest in Catch Valley; has the least
11 amount of impact. Alternative 4, slightly higher in the
12 valley; slightly higher impact than Alternative 3.

13 So as it relates to noise, the impact area
14 relates to construction noise. So general construction
15 noise might be what you would expect: Heavy equipment,
16 grading, construction crews. And for this project,
17 there's a possibility for blasting to install some of
18 the lift towers and the avalanche equipment.

19 So our typical mitigation measures could reduce
20 those items to a less than significant level. So our
21 mitigation: This project will be constructed in one
22 season so the noise impacts are relatively temporary in
23 nature. We have limits on construction days; time of
24 day; we require muffling devices; we require blasting
25 plans. And that would reduce our typical noise to a

1 less than significant.

2 What's different about this project, however,
3 is the use of helicopters to fly in the infrastructure
4 to the remote areas. So they will be flying in lift
5 towers, the avalanche equipment, the mid-stations.
6 Helicopters would be used up to 20 days, and it would be
7 in both valleys and across the ridgeline. And that was
8 what was determined to be significant and unavoidable.

9 Again, for the ranking, Alternative 2 has the
10 greatest impact to Granite Chief Wilderness because of
11 proximity. The Alternative 2 -- Alternative 2 terminal
12 is located near the Squaw Valley Lodge residences, so
13 the greatest impact there.

14 Alternative 3, slightly farther from the
15 wilderness, so slightly less impact. Same location at
16 the Squaw Terminal next to the Squaw Valley Lodge, so
17 same impact there.

18 And then the Alpine Meadows Mid-Station, for
19 Alternative 3, is located relatively close to the
20 existing residence on the Caldwell property, so also an
21 impact there.

22 Alternative 4 had the least impact. It's
23 farthest away from the wilderness. Its Squaw Terminal
24 is located in an entirely different area and not as
25 close or in proximity to residences. And although

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1 Alternative 4 Alpine Mid-Station is also located near
2 the Caldwell residence, it's somewhere farther away than
3 Alternative 3.

4 So now I would like to get into the final
5 impact area of transportation and circulation. There
6 were four impacts in here, all of which were in the
7 Caltrans rights of way.

8 Two things I want to point out before I discuss
9 the impact is, number 1, it doesn't matter which
10 alternative is chosen, whether it's 2, 3, or 4. They
11 all have the same impacts as it relates to
12 transportation and circulation on our roadways.

13 And then, secondly, I just want to remind you
14 that the skier visitation, that small -- that increase
15 in skier visitation results in a increase in the
16 traffic. So, again, busier Saturday would be 422
17 vehicle trips, half in, half out; and a busier Sunday
18 would be 432 trips.

19 So the first impact of the project would have
20 an increased and unacceptable queue length while heading
21 northbound on State Route 89 and turning left on to
22 Alpine Meadows Road. That would be during the Saturday
23 a.m. peak hour.

24 The mitigation for that would be to coordinate
25 with Caltrans to increase the green time at that signal.

1 And by doing so, that would actually reduce -- has the
2 possibility to reduce this to a less than significant
3 impact.

4 Caltrans has verbally told us that they are
5 amenable to doing that, but until that actually goes
6 into effect, we have to consider it significant and
7 unavoidable.

8 So these next three impacts are all in the
9 cumulative sense. So that means, implementation of the
10 gondola project and all reasonably foreseeable projects.
11 So, for example, that could include the Village at Squaw
12 Valley Specific Plan, Alpine Sierra Subdivision, or even
13 the Cold Stream Subdivision Project in the town of
14 Truckee.

15 So in the cumulative sense, there are two
16 Caltrans intersections that are already at an
17 unacceptable level, that would worsen at the Sunday p.m.
18 peak hour. So that roundabout I-80/State Route 89
19 roundabout in Truckee, going eastbound, would have an
20 increased delay of about nine seconds. The State Route
21 89/Squaw Valley Road intersection at the Sunday p.m.
22 peak would have about a 23-second delay as well.

23 Again, getting back to queuing at
24 intersections, so that same queuing point heading north
25 on State Route 89, turning left into Alpine Meadows,

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1 that queuing length would worsen to beyond an acceptable
2 threshold during the Saturday a.m. peak hours. So both
3 project and cumulative scenario.

4 And then, finally, the Caltrans road segment on
5 the Sunday p.m. peak hour, that segment on State Route
6 89 between Squaw Valley Road, heading north, to Truckee,
7 at West River Road; there would be increased traffic
8 there. Although it's not decreasing the level of
9 service to a significant level, it is increasing the
10 volume-to-capacity ratio, which is essentially the
11 number of cars compared to the capacity of the road. So
12 that increases beyond an acceptable level.

13 The mitigation for all those three impacts are
14 the same: It would be to comply with the Placer County
15 Trip Reduction Ordinance. As part of that, there's a
16 transportation demand strategy. And so, really, we're
17 looking for the applicant to implement strategies that
18 would somehow lessen or discourage the traffic during
19 those -- those difficult times.

20 And so examples could be that the resorts could
21 provide a complementary offsite park-and-ride shuttle to
22 get skiers to and from the resorts; membership in the
23 Truckee North Tahoe Transportation Management
24 Association; or the resorts could offer up things like
25 entertainment or meal specials that keep people at the

1 resorts a little bit longer in those afternoon hours and
2 disburse the time over which they depart.

3 So now I would like to get into the CEQA/NEPA
4 process on our next steps. So right now, we're at the
5 Draft EIS/EIR 45-day comment period. Once we receive
6 the comments, the Forest Service and the County and our
7 consultants will jointly address them and formally
8 respond to them in the Final EIS/EIR. Once we release
9 the final document, that's when our processes diverge.

10 So, again, we have two entirely separate
11 environmental reviews, two entirely separate approvals.

12 And because we have the equal level analysis
13 for Alternatives 2, 3, or 4, our decision makers can
14 approve, condition, or deny any of the alternatives.

15 So from the County CEQA side of things, after
16 the Final EIS/EIR is released, I will be going back to
17 Squaw Valley MAC and NTRAC for the recommendation on the
18 entitlements. I'll be coming back to your Planning
19 Commission for your recommendation on the adequacy of
20 the environment document and your recommendation on the
21 entitlements.

22 The Board of Supervisors are the final approval
23 here. I will be asking for certification of the EIR,
24 and the entitlements include, again, the General Plan
25 Amendment at Squaw Valley General Plan to add that

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1 line -- the gondola line to the lift mill; that rezone
2 at Alpine Meadows Base, so, again, that small adjustment
3 between neighborhood commercial and open space zoning to
4 allow for that terminal; and then a Conditional Use
5 permit is required for the ski facilities.

6 On the NEPA side of things, Mr. Eli Ilano, the
7 Tahoe National Forest supervisor, is the decision maker.
8 After the Final EIS/EIR is released, either concurrent
9 or shortly sometime after that, will be the release of a
10 Draft Record of Decision, or Draft ROD.

11 And that's essentially the preliminary decision
12 of what alternative to approve, condition, or deny.
13 When that Draft ROD is released, that initiates a new
14 45-day predecision objection period on that draft ROD.

15 So any person who commented during our Draft
16 EIS/EIR today, in our 45-day comment period that we're
17 going through right now, any person who commented and
18 initiates legal standing -- and I will explain what that
19 means in my next slide. But any person who has legal
20 standing may object on the Draft ROD in that 45-day
21 period.

22 After the 45-day predecision objection period
23 closes, the Forest Service will review if there were any
24 objections. They are required to reach out to the
25 objectioner. They may or may not meet; they may or may

1 not come to some sort of a resolution. Then, after
2 that, the Final ROD is issued. It may be the same,
3 similar, or different from the Draft ROD.

4 We -- as you can see, there are a lot of steps
5 in here, in our different processes and two different
6 decisions that may occur. So the County and Forest
7 Service are currently in dialogue right now just
8 figuring out our sequencing and timing of how we'll make
9 this work together.

10 And then, so for my last slide, I would like to
11 speak to public comment. So right now, we are in the
12 45-day public comment period. Written comment closes at
13 5:00 p.m. on June 11th. A comment -- the commenter only
14 has to provide their comment to one agency, the County
15 or the Forest Service. We share them equally, and we'll
16 be responding to them equally in the Final EIS/EIR. We
17 have e-mail addresses and mailing addresses for your
18 comments here.

19 And now I would like to speak to the legal
20 standing.

21 So in order to have legal standing for the
22 Forest Service to object on the Draft Record of
23 Decision, three things are required: Your full name,
24 your postal address, and the comment must be topical.
25 So for example, if a comment simply said, "I hate ski

1 resorts," that wouldn't be considered topical. It must
2 speak to the project itself, maybe speak to visual or
3 wildlife or what concerns the commenter may have.

4 So as part of that, to help establish any oral
5 commenters today -- to help them establish legal
6 standing, that's why we have the sign-up sheet that has
7 the name and postal address for it. And then the
8 comment is being recorded by a court reporter. And so
9 with those three things, the legal standing should be
10 established.

11 So with that, I'm happy to answer any
12 clarifying questions.

13 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Any questions for Heather?

14 Thank you, Heather. Appreciate it.

15 MR. SEVISON: She did a good job.

16 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Before we start, open it up
17 for the public comment, I want -- I would like to go
18 again -- I want to kind of emphasize some things that
19 Heather already stated, is that you need to sign up.
20 You need to have your address as well, so that we can
21 respond back to you, either the Forest Service or the
22 County. And so if you have not signed up to speak -- we
23 will call you up as we -- as we go through the list. So
24 you haven't signed up, please do that now.

25 And as I mentioned earlier, it will be three

1 minutes for your comments. And as Heather said, it
2 needs to be topical, which today's topic is just the
3 adequacy of the EIS/EIR. And this is not the time to
4 talk about the merits of the project. That will come
5 back before the commission, when you will have time to
6 make your comments related to the merits of it, probably
7 later this summer.

8 So I would ask that you keep your topic
9 specific to what our request is today and it relates to
10 this. And then -- not just how you feel about ski
11 resorts, as was mentioned.

12 So if you tend to wander off and start dealing
13 with the merits, I will very graciously ask you to step
14 back and get more focused on the particular issue of
15 the, again, the EIS or the EIR.

16 And as you speak, if you -- as you are going to
17 be called up by name, I would like you to state your
18 name again and to speak clearly. As was mentioned, we
19 have a court reporter here, and she's going to be
20 hanging on every word that you say. So we need to make
21 sure that she can understand what you are saying. So
22 appreciate that.

23 So I will open it up, and E.J. is going to call
24 people up as we start.

25 Did I miss anything that I needed to state,

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1 Karen, before -- County Counsel, before we start? Okay.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. IVALDI: So Chairman, right now -- the
4 first list. I just have five commenters I see. Others
5 comment -- or are signing up right now. So I will grab
6 that list when they are done. So what I will do is, I
7 will call three names up and just go in order, just so
8 you have time to prepare.

9 But the first names are -- and please forgive
10 me ahead of time if I don't pronounce your name
11 correctly. First name is Chase Schweitzer; then Ellie
12 Waller; and then Greg Parrott.

13 CHAIRPERSON NADER: And again, you will have --
14 you will see a green light; and then when it comes to
15 yellow, you have a minute to wrap up; and then when it's
16 red, I would ask that you conclude your comments.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. SCHWEITZER: Good morning, Placer County
19 Planning Commission. I am Sierra Watch field manager
20 Chase Schweitzer representing Sierra Watch. I ask for
21 the five minutes that's allotted for groups, if that's
22 all right?

23 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Okay. Five minutes.

24 MR. SCHWEITZER: We appreciate you accepting
25 verbal comments at a meeting up here in Eastern Placer

0138-1, Summary (S2)

The comment provides a summary of detailed comments provided below. See responses to the detailed comments below.

0138-2, Wilderness (W2)

Impacts related to the Granite Chief Wilderness and other wilderness areas are addressed in Section 4.3, "Wilderness," in the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0138-1

1 County for the proposed gondola between Squaw Valley and
2 Alpine Meadows, put forth by KSL Capital Partners
3 Subsidiary, Squaw Valley Ski Holdings, now also part of
4 the Alterra Mountain Company.

5 The land in question is special. It's home for
6 a popular hiking trail, incredible scenic vistas, and
7 endangered species. It's also marked by our nation's
8 strongest commitment to preservation, a national
9 wilderness designation. This decision you make about
10 this land is important and will last for generations.

11 Sierra Watch has retained experts in biology,
12 planning, and traffic to help us understand what this
13 project would mean for these invaluable resources, and
14 we look forward to sharing the conclusions of that
15 analysis in a comprehensive written comment.

16 Today, I want to focus your attention on three
17 areas of utmost importance: Wilderness values, wildlife
18 and endangered species, and the role this project would
19 play in the overall intensification of development in
20 the North Lake Tahoe area.

0138-2

21 Wilderness values. The area proposed for
22 development of the gondola is currently wilderness, free
23 from heavy human imprint for generations now. It has
24 served as a gateway, not just to the federally protected
25 Granite Chief Wilderness, but for people willing to make

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0138-2
cont'd

1 the hike and experience the pristine nature of the Five
2 Lakes Trail. This proximity is the reason that the U.S.
3 Forest Service found potential impacts to opportunities
4 for solitude or primitive, unconfined recreation.

0138-3

5 Proposed resource protection measures,
6 consisting of Forest Service design guidelines, intended
7 to help the built environment blend in with the natural,
8 appear entirely inadequate to eliminate the adverse
9 impacts. The proposed route would run through the
10 wilderness designation within 75 feet of the federally
11 owned Granite Chief Wilderness area. Lift towers,
12 cables, and angle stations are incompatible with the
13 wilderness experience, even if you paint them green.

0138-4

14 There's a unique sense of place at the crest of
15 the Sierra and industrial scale infrastructure looming
16 over Granite Chief Wilderness presents a clear threat to
17 the integrity of the Five Lakes Trail and to the
18 wilderness experience.

0138-5

19 Next, wildlife. The project runs through land
20 identified by the United States Fish and Wildlife
21 Service as critical habitat for the preservation and
22 recovery of the endangered Sierra Nevada yellow legged
23 frog. KSL's proposal would place the angle station, a
24 major piece of industrial infrastructure, right next to
25 known populations of frogs at Barstool Lake. Even the

0138-2 cont'd, Wilderness (W2)

0138-3, Resources Protection Measures/Mitigation Measures (RPM/MM)

The comment does not provide specific reasons specifying why the RPMs are inadequate to eliminate adverse impacts to wilderness areas. Therefore, a response cannot be provided. Land use compatibility is addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR in Sections 4.3, "Wilderness," and 4.4, "Land Use."

0138-4, Wilderness (W2)

See response to comment 0138-2, above, regarding wilderness effects.

0138-5, Wildlife and Aquatics (W&A)

Impacts related to the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog are addressed in Section 4.14, "Wildlife and Aquatics," in the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0138-5
cont'd

1 environmentally preferable alternative routes would
2 disturb and destroy wetland and riparian habitat usable
3 by the endangered frog.

0138-6

4 Lastly, development intensification. Although
5 proponents tout their project as a traffic solution, the
6 Forest Service and Placer County have found that
7 construction of the Squaw/Alpine gondola would actually
8 attract more than 700 new visitors and put around 430
9 more cars on the road during busy weekend days.

10 When the project is considered cumulatively
11 along with KSL's controversial waterpark and the Village
12 at Squaw Valley expansion plans, the picture is
13 particularly grim. Travelers would expect slow speeds
14 and long waits extending from Interstate 80 to Squaw
15 Valley.

0138-7

16 Sierra Watch is concerned that the project may
17 also encourage new development in a treasured alpine
18 landscape by providing new growth-inducing
19 infrastructure. A gondola would not only connect Alpine
20 Meadows to existing and proposed development in Squaw
21 Valley, it would also stop in the midst of the White
22 Wolf property, in between the two resorts. That's where
23 Troy Caldwell has submitted initial plans to build 38
24 luxury homes, a ski lift, a lodge, tennis courts,
25 equestrian facilities, with a connection to the new

0138-5 cont'd, Wildlife and Aquatics (W&A)

0138-6, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)

Impacts related to traffic are addressed in Section 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," in the Draft EIS/EIR. In particular, cumulative traffic impacts are described in Section 4.7.4.2. RPMs and mitigation measures are identified where appropriate. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0138-7, Other NEPA/CEQA Analysis (ONCA)

See Section 5.2.3, "Growth-Inducing Impacts," in the Draft EIS/EIR. Cumulative effects of the project in connection with other probable future projects (including the proposed White Wolf Development) are evaluated in Sections 4.1 through 4.17. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

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0138-7
cont'd

1 gondola as a central amenity.
2 Thank you for listening to my comments prepared
3 for today and Sierra Watch looks forward to submitting a
4 written comment to you for your view as well. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you. And you kept
7 that in your three minutes, so I appreciate that.

8 Good morning.

9 MS. WALLER: Good morning. Ellie Waller, Tahoe
10 Vista resident. I need to add PO Box 535, Tahoe Vista,
11 California 96148 to my sign-in. Thank you very much
12 there.

0138-8

13 Simply stated, keep the gondola out of
14 congressionally designated wilderness and design low
15 profile for a better visual outcome that will have a
16 less of a visual impact on Five Lakes and the wilderness
17 experience, which is equally another outdoor recreation
18 arena. This comes down to a skier experience at the
19 expense of environmentally superior and less scenic
20 impact alternatives.

0138-9

21 Be reminded that any number increase of people
22 in cars on State Route 89 will exacerbate an already
23 overburdened highway. Caltrans, the sheriff, and CHP
24 tried a lane shift this season unsuccessfully and
25 ultimately has cumulative evacuation impacts with this

0138-7 cont'd, Other NEPA/CEQA Analysis (ONCA)

0138-8, Wilderness (W2)

Impacts related to the GCW and visual resources are addressed in Sections 4.3, "Wilderness," and 4.2, "Visual Resources," respectively, in the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0138-9, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)

Impacts related to traffic, including on SR 89, are addressed in Section 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," in the Draft EIS/EIR. RPMs and mitigation measures are identified where appropriate to reduce significant and potentially significant impacts. Impacts related to emergency evacuation are addressed in Section 4.6, "Public Safety," in the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0138-9
cont'd

1 project and others as mentioned.

0138-10

2 Lastly, Martis Valley West Parcel is an
3 excellent example of community pushback due to obvious
4 scenic and similar building issues atop a ridgeline,
5 evacuation issues, and unintended but real impacts to
6 the Lake Tahoe Basin.

0138-11

7 Duly note that -- the respect to this
8 commission from the community for their extraordinary
9 research during that process, as well as this one, and
10 not certifying that EIR for various and similar reasons
11 to this one, and, sadly, was overturned by our Board of
12 Supervisors.

13 Thank you for the opportunity today.

14 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you.

15 And I may have not said it earlier. But any of
16 you who are going to make comments today, I would also
17 encourage you to do this -- was mentioned by our first
18 commenter -- that you document this and put it in
19 writing, either in an e-mail or a letter to us. I think
20 that just helps to support your comments by doing that.

21 E.J., the next?

22 MR. IVALDI: The next was Greg Parrott. And
23 following that is Jeff Shellito and Ron Cohen.

24 MR. PARROTT: Hi. My name is Greg Parrott.

0138-12

25 I've been hiking up in the Five Lakes area for

0138-9 cont'd, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and
Parking (T&C/T&P)

0138-10, Other (O2)

No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or
conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment.
No further response is warranted.

0138-11, Other (O2)

No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or
conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment.
No further response is warranted.

0138-12, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or
qualities of the project and does not address the content,
analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest
Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning
Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the
commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of
the project into consideration when making a decision
regarding the project.

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0138-12
cont'd

1 about 50 years, so pretty familiar with that. And my
2 principal motivation for me is just to advocate among
3 the choices, that Alternative 4 as far superior.
4 Alternative 2, one of the areas that, again, is
5 extremely close to the turn station at Alpine Meadows,
6 comes within a hundred feet of what's called, here,
7 Barstool Lake. At one point, it was also called Frog
8 Lake.

0138-13

9 If that lake gets developed -- first off, I
10 would advocate that if any of you have not actually gone
11 to the lake, that you go, just to get the visual
12 appreciation of the lake. If it gets developed, there's
13 the endangerment of the species, that's been talked
14 about, that -- the frog. But in addition, it sets a
15 precedent, in part, because White Wolf also wants to put
16 a station up there, a dropoff station in another
17 proposal. And secondly, the installation of the shelter
18 for the Gazex exploders would need some maintenance path
19 and so forth for people to service it.

20 So once the precedent is set by putting in
21 something that -- a turn station for Alpine Meadows
22 at -- using Alternative 2, once that precedent is set,
23 the incremental change to, then, say, okay, let's
24 approve the White Wolf; doesn't make that much of a
25 difference. That precedent is set; basically destroys

0138-12 cont'd, Opinion (O1)

0138-13, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0138-13
cont'd

1 the lake, whether you call it Frog Lake or you call it
2 Barstool Lake. Once that precedent is set, you could
3 rename the lake as Lost Lake. You essentially lost one
4 of the relatively uncommon lakes within the high alpine
5 area.

0138-14

6 So my advocacy is for Alternative 4.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you for your
9 comments.

10 MR. SHELLITO: Hello. My name is Jeff
11 Shellito. I'm a homeowner in Truckee. I've been a
12 skier up here since the 1970s and past season
13 ticketholder at Squaw and Alpine Squaw, as well as Sugar
14 Bowl and Northstar.

0138-15

15 I'm urging that you not -- that you not
16 consider the option 2 and give more emphasis to some of
17 the others, if you have to approve it at all.

0138-16

18 But I have to say, I was involved in the
19 original wilderness effort by the region, including the
20 Sierra Club, which I was a member of in the 1970s. And
21 I can say that the reason Granite Chief was pushed for
22 wilderness was to not only stop commercial logging in
23 the Diamond Crossing area through some land exchanges
24 with Southern Pacific, but was to prevent encroachment
25 by the existing ski developments in Squaw Valley and

0138-13 cont'd, Opinion (O1)

0138-14, Opinion (O1)

The comment is directed towards the project approval process and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. All comment letters submitted during the Draft EIS/EIR public review period will be reviewed and considered by the Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors before a decision on the project is rendered.

0138-15, Opinion (O1)

The comment is directed towards the project approval process and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. All comment letters submitted during the Draft EIS/EIR public review period will be reviewed and considered by the Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors before a decision on the project is rendered.

0138-16, Other (O2)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

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0138-16
cont'd

1 Alpine Meadows.

2 I think one of the reasons the boundaries were
3 written the way they were, were originally to prevent
4 encroachment of ski development, and it's unfortunate
5 the Forest Service didn't act on trying to do land
6 swaps, like it did in Diamond Crossing to -- instead of
7 having Southern Pacific sell it to the Caldwell family.
8 But that's past history.

9 I'm going to save most of my comments on the
10 policy issue, because you said that would be something
11 at a later hearing.

12 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Right.

0138-17

13 MR. SHELLITO: But one of the things I wanted
14 to bring your attention was, I'm not sure the Draft EIR
15 has really spent enough time examining the impact of
16 climate change on the viability of this gondola's
17 operations and the operations of both ski resorts.

18 And I say that because, just like last winter
19 where we had a lot of rain events, on top of snow, and
20 we had a lot of wind holds -- and in a case of a lot of
21 the resorts, they didn't have enough snow to really open
22 their terrain at Christmas.

23 And in the case of Sugar Bowl, which I'm more
24 familiar with, because I've been a season pass holder.
25 The Forest Service, a number of years ago, approved two

0138-16 cont'd, Other (O2)

0138-17, Greenhouse Gases (GHG)

Climate change is addressed in Section 4.11, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change," in the Draft EIS/EIR. See in particular the discussion under Impact 4.11-2, which describes the impacts of climate change on the project.

0138-17
cont'd

0138-17 cont'd, Greenhouse Gases (GHG)

1 new lifts on Mt. Judah. It's called the Judah chair and
2 the Summit chair. And both of those, at least in the
3 last two years, were hardly ever open. I don't think
4 the Summit Chair opened at all this year. And, yet, the
5 infrastructure required for those two chair lifts are
6 permanently there, on Donner Summit. I know there's not
7 a wilderness ramification, but I'm concerned that once
8 this gondola is built, it's going to be a permanent
9 fixture on what currently, on the Alpine Meadows side,
10 is undeveloped ridgelines and steep slopes.

11 So I think, when you prepare the Final EIR, you
12 might want to examine how often this gondola might
13 really be running if we have more winters like we did
14 last winter, where there were a lot of wind holds in ski
15 resorts; there was inadequate coverage, and, yet, the
16 infrastructure required would be permanent.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you for your comment.

19 MR. SHELLITO: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Appreciate it.

21 MR. COHEN: Hi. I'm Ron Cohen. I'm the acting
22 president and chief operating officer for Squaw
23 Valley/Alpine Meadows. Thank you for the opportunity to
24 speak with you today.

25 I first wanted to thank you, and particularly

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1 staff and the agencies for the work done on this very
2 comprehensive document. So thank you.

0138-18

3 It's -- the process has been long and it's a
4 big document. But the development of the alternatives
5 are exactly what this process is supposed to achieve,
6 and, as a company, we're very thankful for what's
7 happened to date.

0138-19

8 To speak to two of the issues that were raised,
9 you know, of particular interest, we're very interested
10 in working with the environmental community. And we've
11 continued to do so throughout the process since making
12 the project application. Two of those particular issues
13 are the Granite Chief Wilderness and the Sierra Nevada
14 yellow legged frog. We focused on those issues with the
15 environmental community, and I'm very happy to share
16 with you that we are signatories now to a Memorandum of
17 Understanding with the Sierra Club, National Mother
18 Lode, Local Tahoe, where we are agreeing to a set of
19 principles that align around the alternatives developed
20 in the agreement.

21 And so we think that's a great thing. As a
22 company, we'll continue to try to work with the rest of
23 the environmental community, where we think, at the --
24 at the end of that process, with the California
25 Wilderness Coalition as well, and are hopeful that we'll

0138-18, Other (O2)

The comment is an introductory statement and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. Therefore, a response is not warranted.

0138-19, Summary (S2)

No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0138-19
cont'd

1 be signing an MOU with them as well.

2 And so we're going to continue down that path

3 of trying to address the issues that are raised by the

4 project and achieve the best possible project for the

5 community, for the environment, and for skiers and

6 snowboarders that come to Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows.

7 So thank you for everything you have done and

8 appreciate it, and look forward to working with you on

9 the project as it goes forward.

10 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you for your comment.

11 MR. IVALDI: Chairman, I have just four names

12 on the list. I'm going to read those four names, and

13 please come up in that order. Craig Hamilton, Melissa

14 Siig, Mark Calhoun, and Mary Coolidge.

15 MR. HAMILTON: Hi. I'm Craig Hamilton. I live

16 on Alpine Meadows Road, right in the heart of the

17 avalanche zone, very close to where all this is going to

18 happen.

19 And I just want to say, first of all, we love

20 the idea of the gondola. Strong advocate for

21 Alternative 4. You know, the visual impact already on

22 Five Lakes Trail of the Gazex machines has been pretty

23 substantial. We go hiking up there now and right in

24 your face, these giant, kind of, monstrous industrial

25 looking things.

0138-20

0138-21

0138-19 cont'd, Summary (S2)

0138-20, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0138-21, Visual Resources (VR)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

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0138-22

1 And that's what I want to fundamentally draw
 2 attention to in my comment, is the impact of these Gazex
 3 installations on those of us living in Alpine Meadows.
 4 Anybody here, who lives in Alpine Meadows, who
 5 experienced the first Gazex detonations of the new
 6 machines last winter, probably shares my sentiment that
 7 it was a terrifying event.

8 And we live in a -- we live in an area where we
 9 go through bomb blasts every time there's snow. So
 10 we're used to blast, blast, blast, waking up. You know,
 11 your alarm clock is the detonations. But the Gazex
 12 machines, the shock wave force hitting our houses on
 13 Alpine Meadows Road, actually feels like your house is
 14 being hit by a bomb. It is -- it's extremely intense,
 15 it's frightening. One of my neighbors said his children
 16 burst into tears when the thing went off.

17 And so the thought that a bunch more Gazex
 18 machines are going to get installed right by our homes
 19 there just has me want to draw attention to both the
 20 sonic and, kind of, blast impact of those on our little
 21 neighborhood.

22 And also the visual impact on Five Lakes Trail.
 23 Because I hiked up there the other day and, again, was
 24 sort of reminded, wow, this experience has dramatically
 25 changed because now we have these -- all this

0138-23

0138-22, Noise (N)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0138-23, Visual Resources (VR)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0138-23
cont'd

1 industrial, you know, big machines here on our trail.
2 And the thought that a whole nother cluster are going to
3 be there, on that trail, visually, is disturbing.

0138-24

4 So I just would like to draw the attention back
5 to some of the alternatives that were presented in the
6 original analysis, that led to the Gazex install. I
7 know this is about the new -- the new installation, but
8 I just feel, the whole idea maybe needs to be revisited
9 with an eye to the impact it's having on that little
10 community up there, those of us who live there.

11 And I say that with some ambivalence because we
12 obviously also value the protection that they bring.
13 And I know there was a snow nets alternative considered
14 that was about eight times as costly as the Gazex
15 option. And -- but it would probably have a much less
16 impactful -- environmentally and just from a habitation
17 point of view alternative.

18 So that's just the main thing I wanted to bring
19 up as this is all being evaluated is, are there other
20 ways to deal with that issue.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you for your
23 comments.

24 MS. SIIG: My name is Melissa Siig. I am a
25 14-year resident and homeowner in Alpine Meadows.

0138-23 cont'd, Visual Resources (VR)

0138-24, Other (O2)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

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1 So you are not going to present the Gazex
2 separately, right? We can comment on this now?

0138-25

3 Okay. So I live right near Craig in the heart
4 of avalanche territory. My house has been hit multiple
5 times by avalanches. Last year and 2011, were major
6 occurrences which made national news. We're very
7 concerned about avalanches in the area. We've been
8 urging the County to do something for years. We're very
9 appreciative that action has been taken, because this is
10 a very concerning area, not just for the residents and
11 the homeowners, but people driving up and down the road
12 and employees who drive up and down the road.

0138-26

13 However, we are deeply concerned that there was
14 no testing of the Gazex before it was put in. No sonic
15 testing on the impacts to the houses. And it's not just
16 felt on the houses lining Alpine Meadows Road. People
17 hear it through the entire valley.

18 And like Craig said, it sounds like a bomb,
19 like a military style bomb is being dropped near your
20 house. And I've lived through years and years of your
21 typical avalanche bombs being thrown. And I would say,
22 this is 10 to 20 times stronger. It is terrifying. It
23 rattles your windows. I worry about the foundation of
24 my house.

25 And this past winter, we only had it a few

0138-25, Other (O2)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0138-26, Other (O2)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0138-26
cont'd

1 times. We didn't have such a massive winter. But just
 2 thinking about next winter actually terrifies me. And
 3 it's -- it's a mixed feeling, because I'm so happy that
 4 there's something that is protecting the road and our
 5 houses and can be used on a 24-hour basis, versus ski
 6 patrol hand charges, which are only during daylight
 7 hours.

8 However, I'm very concerned that there was not
 9 more testing done. I'm sure this had to do with Office
 10 of Emergency Services, but I don't understand why there
 11 was no testing, there was no public hearing. These were
 12 just pushed through. And I worry about the impacts of
 13 Gazex to the houses. I think they can protect. I think
 14 they can also harm. So I urge you to look more into
 15 that. And, you know, there's more being put in as we
 16 speak.

17 Just quickly, on the gondola. I am a little
 18 ambivalent on the gondola, but I urge you all -- I don't
 19 know if you've been up Five Lakes. It concerns me that
 20 people are going to be deciding the future of this, who
 21 have never even been up Five Lakes, including the
 22 commissioners and the Board of Supervisors. I encourage
 23 you to go up there. It is a beautiful area. And I
 24 encourage you also to look at this cumulatively. I
 25 feel, sometimes, the County looks at things in

0138-27

0138-26 cont'd, Other (O2)

0138-27, Opinion (O1)

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cont'd

1 isolation, but there are so many projects proposed for
2 Squaw and Alpine. I encourage you to look at this.

3 And it worries me also that if they say it will
4 just increase skier visits a little bit, I'm not sure of
5 the purpose of this. If it's going to increase traffic,
6 but not increase a ton of skier visits, why bother?

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you for your
9 comments.

10 MR. CALHOUN: Mark Calhoun, resident of Olympic
11 Valley and member of the Squaw Valley MAC.

0138-28

12 Just two issues that I'm concerned with: We
13 had a presentation at MAC by Heather and this one was
14 more comprehensive. And there's -- in talking with
15 people and residents in Squaw, the one issue that kept
16 coming up that I just want to impress on you is the
17 close proximity of the base station in Squaw to the
18 Squaw Valley Lodge. And I just had several people bring
19 it up.

0138-29

20 I also own a grocery store in Squaw and people
21 would come up to me in the store, too, that have their
22 condos in the Squaw Valley Lodge. And so -- and then
23 they would also mention the proximity to Cushing Pond
24 also. But -- so that was something that came up quite a
25 bit, so I think that should be looked at closer.

0138-27 cont'd, Opinion (O1)

0138-28, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0138-29, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0138-29
cont'd

1 So from that point of view, Alternative 4 is
2 probably the best, but I'm not going to pass judgment on
3 that. I am still open minded. I'm just passing on what
4 I have been hearing from other people.

0138-30

5 And then the other concern of mine is, I don't
6 have -- we asked a question of Heather at the meeting.
7 But I don't know -- and Lindsey clarified it somewhat.
8 But I would still like to have a little more clarity on
9 the roads -- or the disturbance that will occur on
10 building the -- the towers, the foundations for the
11 towers.

12 As I understand, in Alternative 3 and 4, it's
13 on Troy's property, and it already has some
14 infrastructure there. So that's not a problem.

15 But, for example, if number 2 was done, that
16 would be substantial impact of some kind. So just to
17 get some more clarity on that, I would like to get that.

18 Thank you very much for your time.

19 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you for your
20 comments.

21 MS. COOLIDGE: Hi. I'm Mary Coolidge. I'm
22 box -- what is my box? 1857 Tahoe City.

23 I've lived in Alpine Meadows off and on since
24 1971. Seen a lot of changes, a lot of them good, most
25 of them good.

0138-29 cont'd, Opinion (O1)

0138-30, Alternatives (A)

Table 2-2 of the Final EIS/EIR presents a comparison of the disturbance of key project elements associated with each alternative. The remainder of the comment raises no specific issues related to the content analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. No further response is warranted.

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0138-31

1 And I -- my -- I guess I have three things that
 2 I'm concerned about: The first is the visual impact.
 3 You are going to be able to see that gondola along the
 4 ridgeline when you drive up the Alpine Meadows Road,
 5 because I live on upper John Scott Trail, and I'm going
 6 to be able to see that from my living room, and I don't
 7 want to, particularly.

0138-32

8 I'm concerned about the traffic because as
 9 everyone else has said, we've got a lot of stuff in the
 10 pipeline now, in terms of development. We already have
 11 a horrendous traffic issue. On the weekends, I work in
 12 Squaw Valley. And from Alpine Meadows to Squaw Valley
 13 is maybe three and a half to 5 miles, and it can take me
 14 up to an hour to make that left turn on 89, get down 89
 15 enough to make a left turn onto Squaw Valley Road. And
 16 by about ten past 9:00, Squaw Valley is parked out, so
 17 they are starting to send people to Alpine.

0138-33

18 And I think -- so if we have the gondola, the
 19 people that can't park at Squaw are going to want to
 20 come and park at Alpine. Alpine gets marked out by
 21 9:30, quarter to 10:00, so the Alpine Meadows Road has a
 22 giant traffic jam because it's not nearly as wide and
 23 it's longer than the Squaw Valley Road.

0138-34

24 And my third point -- I agree with everybody
 25 who lives in Alpine. The Gazex is terrifying. My house

0138-31, Visual Resources (VR)

Visual impacts of the proposed gondola are addressed in Section 4.2, "Visual Resources," in the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0138-32, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)

The comment suggests that the proposed Gondola project would cause diversion of traffic to the Alpine Meadows ski resort due to the lack of available parking at Squaw Valley. Further, the comment states that the added traffic would cause traffic jams on Alpine Meadows Road. The comment is accurate in that diversion of existing skiers from the Squaw Valley ski area to the Alpine Meadows ski area could occur under certain conditions. This potential scenario is evaluated in the Draft EIS/EIR. Refer to pages 4.7-22 through 4.7-25 of the Draft EIS/EIR for a detailed discussion of the expected diversion during study periods. As shown in the project's trip generation estimate (refer to Table 4.7-13), the effect of diverted skiers between one resort and the other was considered in the traffic impact analysis. As shown, the project is estimated to result in a shift in 300 daily trips from the Squaw Valley to Alpine Meadows Ski Areas on a Saturday. On a Sunday, the project would result in a shift of 880 daily trips from Alpine Meadows to Squaw Valley. This corresponds to 48 shifted Saturday AM peak hour vehicle trips and 141 shifted Sunday PM peak hour trips. The impact conclusions in the EIS/EIR consider these diversions. Also see the Master Response related to Vehicle Trip Reduction Measures in Section 1.8, "Master Responses."

0138-33, Transportation and Circulation/Traffic and Parking (T&C/T&P)

The potential for the proposed gondola to result in increased vehicle trips is addressed in Draft EIS/EIR Section 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation." In particular, the traffic analysis in the Draft EIS/EIR includes an analysis of parking and changes in traffic patterns and parking use between Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley with implementation of the proposed Gondola.

0138

0138-34, Noise (N)

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

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cont'd

0138-34 cont'd, Noise (N)

1 feels like it comes up, off the foundation, and then
2 settles back down and we all scream and jump. I know
3 that there's three more currently under the -- they are
4 being put in on what's called the South Ridge, so just
5 around the corner, kind of, from Five Lakes. They are
6 already putting in, I think it's, three, it may be four
7 more.

8 So if we count those, plus the ones that are
9 going to go in with the gondola, it's going to be -- I
10 don't think anybody is going to want to live there
11 anymore.

12 I don't know what the solution is. I don't
13 know if there's a warning system. But they blast off,
14 and especially before we had very much snow, it really
15 was terrifying. Now, it's not quite so bad when there's
16 a snow cushion. But it's a real issue and I don't know
17 what the solution is. But I don't think more is
18 necessarily better.

19 Thank you all for your attention and for coming
20 today.

21 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you for your
22 comments.

23 Anyone else, E.J.?

24 MR. IVALDI: I don't have anymore on the list,
25 but I will double check the list up there so maybe open

1 it up and see if there's anyone else.

2 CHAIRPERSON NADER: If there's no one else, I

3 am going to close the -- is there anybody else here.

4 I'm going to close the public comment on this.

5 And again, I would encourage you, if you did

6 comment or if you didn't, please, if you have questions

7 you want to bring up with regards to the EIS and the

8 EIR, please document it. Please send it in. And they

9 will be addressed. You will get a response to your --

10 to your letters or your e-mails. So please get those

11 in. The time -- I think it's stated -- what is it? I

12 think it's June 11th?

13 MS. BECKMAN: June 11th.

14 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you, Heather.

15 June 11th.

16 So I appreciate you all attending for this

17 item.

18 So I bring it back to the Commission for any

19 comments that you, as commissioners, would like to bring

20 up, about anything that you would like to see dealt

21 with.

22 MR. SEVISON: What's the next steps?

23 Oh, here she is.

24 MS. BECKMAN: Here I am.

25 So next steps, after the close of public

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Public Meeting

1 comment on June 11th, the County and Forest Service will
2 collectively get back together with our consultants and
3 formally respond to comments.

4 This Gazex issue has emerged in the last couple
5 of weeks in the several -- we've had three night
6 meetings on the project, leading up to this Planning
7 Commission, and Gazex has certainly been emerging. So
8 that's definitely something that we'll be researching
9 and looking into more and I'm sure we'll address in some
10 fashion in the final document.

11 MR. SEVISON: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Great.

13 Any questions for Heather or any of the
14 consultants here?

15 No? Okay. I guess not.

16 MR. MOSS: Thanks for coming.

17 MONTGOMERY: Well, then, I guess we'll close
18 this part of our meetings related to the hearing for the
19 EIS.

20 MR. IVALDI: Chairman, I would just add that
21 just for everybody's reference, the places you can
22 submit comments are up on the screen, so we'll leave
23 that on. And our next item is not until 11:30. So
24 we'll leave that up for the next 15 minutes.

25 CHAIRPERSON NADER: We'll take a 20-minute

1 break and be promptly back here at 11:30 for our next
2 item.
3 MR. IVALDI: One more comment. That
4 information is also up on our -- the county website as
5 well --
6 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Okay. Thank you.
7 MR. IVALDI: -- as well as the documents.
8 Thank you.
9 CHAIRPERSON NADER: Thank you, E.J.
10 (Time noted: 11:12 a.m.)
11 (Further proceedings were held but
12 not reported by the Certified
13 Shorthand Reporter.)
14 ---o0o---
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1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
2
3 I, KATHRYN S. SWANK, a Certified Shorthand Reporter
4 of the State of California, do hereby certify:
5 That I am a disinterested person herein; that the
6 foregoing proceedings was reported in shorthand by me,
7 Kathryn S. Swank, a Certified Shorthand Reporter of the
8 State of California, and thereafter transcribed into
9 typewriting.
10 I further certify that I am not of counsel or
11 attorney for any of the parties to said proceedings nor
12 in any way interested in the outcome of said
13 proceedings.
14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
15 this 5th day of June 2018.
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18
19
20
21 KATHRYN S. SWANK, CSR
22 Certified Shorthand Reporter
23 License No. 13061
24
25

Will Hollo

From: Annie Ballard <aaballard@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 10:19 AM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: No common good in the Squaw-Alpine gondola

Dear Forest Service,

0010-1 Please accept my comment into the public record a few hours after the deadline; I had a family health emergency yesterday.

There is no justification for allowing the Squaw-Alpine Gondola to cross, and impact heavily on, our public lands. The motto of the Forest Service reads: **Caring for the Land and Serving People**. This destructive project does neither.

In order for the Forest Service to overlook the multitude of negative environmental impacts outlined in the Draft EIS/EIR, there should be demonstrable and concrete ways in which the gondola will serve the public good, across a diverse spectrum of users and stakeholders. Unlike the controversial development proposed within Squaw Valley, which would be constructed on land already disturbed by the hand of man and has a self-contained viewshed, the gondola intrudes into a pristine natural environment, disturbs currently untouched ecosystems and habitats, and can be seen from many miles in every direction.

How many members of the public will actually benefit from this project? The stated purpose of the gondola is to transport a subset of skiers, in winter only, from one ski area to another. The other reasons stated by the forest service, namely, the need for added beginner/intermediate terrain at Squaw and added amenities at Alpine Meadows, again serve only a small subset of the overall users of these for-profit, private resorts, and are weak reasons to undertake such a massive and impactful project. SVSH could improve the amenities at Alpine via other avenues, and Squaw only needs more beginner/intermediate terrain when the upper mountain cannot open in inclement weather, which begs the question, "Can the proposed Squaw-Alpine gondola fully operate in conditions when the upper mountain at Squaw cannot operate, and with Summit chair most likely closed on those days, could Alpine Meadows effectively handle additional users?"

0010-2 At very best, the gondola will operate five months out of the year, for a finite number of years, until climate change shortens and then eventually eliminates the viable ski season in the Sierra Nevada. The towers and Gasex exploders/shacks will, however, remain 365 days a year as a scar on the landscape and a relic--forever.

0010-3 Being an avid skier myself and having skied at some of the mega-resorts like Snowbird-Alta and many places in the Alps, I would testify that the time spent traversing from one major area to another rather than skiing runs on smaller lifts is wasted time, especially if you have to return to your car at the end of the day. The average skier may use this sort of connecting gondola once or twice as a novelty, soon learning that it detracts from, rather than adds value to, their day on the hill. The beginner/intermediates taking lessons, who need to be transported from Squaw to Alpine on inclement weather days, is a small subset of the users of this huge land area that their needs should not legitimately be considered those of the "public".

0010-4 In sum, the number of users who will benefit from the construction of this damaging, high-impact project represents a small fraction of the overall users of the Squaw and Alpine valleys combined, and benefits that subset of users for less than half of each year.

Conversely, how many members of the public will be *negatively* impacted by this project? The impact of the gondola and its construction on the Five Lakes Trail, one of the most heavily used summer trails in one of Northern California's

0010-1, Purpose and Need (P&N)

The Draft EIS/EIR states that "the Forest Service's purpose for the project is to improve developed winter recreation opportunities in the Scott Management Area, consistent with the LRMP." The management emphasis provided in the Forest Plan for the Scott Management Area supports this purpose; it states that in this management area, "Development of private sector ski area maintenance, operation, and planning will be emphasized during the planning period." As identified by the commenter, the Forest Service purpose and need goes on to identify improved connectivity between the resorts, additional terrain suitable for beginners, and teaching and additional amenities as factors supporting the need for the project, which are all connected to direction provided in the Forest Plan for the Scott Management Area. Actual analysis provided in the Draft EIS/EIR, however, centers around impacts that would occur to individual resources of the human and natural environments as they pertain to the stated purpose and need in Chapter 1, "Introduction." Rationale specifically related to how the project would or would not meet the project's identified purpose and need is provided in the Record of Decision (ROD), which will be prepared and made available as a Draft for public review; Placer County's decision on how the project would or would not meet the project's identified CEQA project objectives will be made by the Placer County Board of Supervisors.

0010-2, Other (O2)

Climate change and visual resources impacts are addressed in Sections 4.11, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change," and 4.2, "Visual Resources," of the Draft EIS/EIR. The climate change analysis not only evaluates the GHG emissions from the project, but also discloses the potential effects of climate change on the project. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master

0010

Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0010-3, Other (O2)

The comment provides opinions regarding the frequency/amount of use of the gondola if built, implying that levels of use would be low. If use of the gondola is below projections in the Draft EIS/EIR, then several categories of environmental effects would be less than identified in the EIS/EIR (e.g., utilities, traffic). However, no specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0010-4, Recreation (R1)

Project impacts on the Five Lakes Trail are addressed in Section 4.1, "Recreation," of the Draft EIS/EIR. Also see response to comment 0010-3, above, regarding the level of use of the gondola. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0010-4 cont'd
 premiere tourist destinations, will be devastating. I would like to take a moment to remind you of the significance of this trail in the context of Tahoe area tourism and enjoyment by locals. This is one of only two trails in the region which meets all of the following criteria (the overcrowded Eagle Lake Trail being the other):

- kid-friendly
- dog-friendly
- access to a swim-able alpine lake in under 2.5 miles
- access to wilderness area in under 2.5 miles
- Pacific Crest Trail access
- south-facing, longer usable season than many trails
- spectacular exposed granite landscape, unique to the Sierra Nevada

0010-5
 In addition, the gondola will negatively impact the experience of visitors to Granite Chief Wilderness, hikers on the Pacific Crest Trail, residents of Alpine Meadows (through noise pollution from added Gasex exploders, disturbance during construction period, and permanent loss of pristine viewshed). The EIS/EIR also predicts increased vehicular traffic and carbon emissions from those cars as well as the gondola itself, factors which affect all area residents and visitors.

0010-6
 I have been a Squaw passholder for ten years, and I remain totally unconvinced that this gondola is anything but a marketing scheme whose real purpose is simply that SVSH will be able to use "Largest Ski Area in North America" or some such slogan. Does the Forest Service really want to be a pawn in that marketing initiative?

I hope that, at the very least, the USFS will diligently review user statistics from Snowbird-Alta, Big Sky-Moonlight, and Whistler-Blackcomb to fully understand the actual end-user benefits resulting from this type of resort expansion, beyond advertising gimmicks that benefit only the corporate owners.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Annie Ballard

--

Annie Ballard
aaballard@gmail.com
 530-412-1520
 Mailing:
 PO Box 6317
 Tahoe City, CA 96145
 Physical:
 6710 Springs Ct.
 Tahoma, CA 96142

0010-4 cont'd,

0010-5, Other (O2)

These issues are addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR in Sections 4.1, "Recreation," 4.2, "Visual Resources," 4.3, "Wilderness," 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," 4.9, "Noise," and 4.11, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change."

The Gazex avalanche mitigation system, which was included as part of all action alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. However, since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gazex avalanche mitigation system has been removed as a component of any of the action alternatives for this project. See the Master Response on this topic in Section 1.8, "Master Responses," for more information on the removal of Gazex from the project.

0010-6, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0038

0038-1, Other (O2)

Potential effects related to wilderness, traffic, emergency evacuation, and water use are addressed in Draft EIS/EIR (see Sections 4.3, 4.7, 4.6, and 4.8, respectively). The comment does not provide specific reasons specifying why the Draft EIS/EIR analysis of these issues is inadequate. Therefore, a further response is not warranted.

0038-1

Date submitted (Pacific Standard Time): 6/5/2018 5:23:06 PM
First name: Caryn
Last name: Dombroski
Organization:
Title:
Official Representative/Member Indicator:
Address1: 10695 Palisades
Address2:
City: Truckee
State: CA
Province/Region:
Zip/Postal Code: 96161
Country: United States
Email: caryndombroski@gmail.com
Phone: 510 501 2017
Comments:

I am strongly opposed to the huge development planned for Squaw as well as the base to base gondola. I've skied both Alpine and Squaw and I've also backpacked extensively in the Sierra. The infringement onto the wilderness area is unconscionable. The traffic impact on the already congested streets of the Tahoe basin during busy seasons will be serious. Emergency evacuation is already fragile at best. None of these issues, nor the water use issue, are adequately addressed in the EIR. This has potential long term and deleterious effects on the wilderness, national forest and waterways of the area. We should object in any and every way possible to the serious impact on forest and wilderness areas.

Will Hollo

From: Megan Chillemi <megan@chillemi.com>
Sent: Friday, June 22, 2018 11:05 AM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: Base to Base Gondola

Gentlemen:

Our two primary concerns on the proposed base to base gondola are twofold:

- 0032-1 | • Impact on the Granite Chief wilderness. Either we are going to maintain a wilderness area, or not.
- 0032-2 | • KSL has maintained that the gondola will be operational only during the winter season. The ski resorts are all searching for a new business model with the continuing lack of snow and shorter winter season. The gondola will soon be a new tourist attraction, with year-round operation.

Megan & Jack Chillemi
8819 Cutthroat Avenue
Kings Beach, California 96143

0032-1, Wilderness (W2)

Impacts related to the GCW are addressed in Section 4.3, "Wilderness," of the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0032-2, Project Description (PD)

Proposed operation and long-term maintenance of the gondola is described on pages 2-13 and 2-14 of the Draft EIS/EIR. Additionally, RPM MUL-4 in Appendix B of the Draft EIS/EIR limits seasonal operation periods; implementation of this RPM would be part of the Forest Service and County permits and cannot be modified without amendments to said permits. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

0065

Will Hollo

From: Ron Grassi <ronsallygrassi@mac.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 6:09 PM
To: Scoping Comments
Cc: Judy and Jerry Winters
Subject: Objection to Gondola

0065-1 | I am writing to object to the Squaw Alpine gondola proposal. The impact of this gondola would significantly impact in a very negative way the environment at Lake Tahoe. This wilderness area, as designated, must be left intact. It is a special place for hiking and enjoying the quiet and beauty of the Sierras. Please deny this project and preserve our wilderness as a heritage area and special place for the present and for future generations. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sally Grassi
450 Jackpine St
Tahoe City

0065-1, Opinion (O1)

Although the project would be located outside of the Lake Tahoe Basin, the Draft EIS/EIR impact analysis expands to the Basin for specific resource areas, such as traffic (including VMT) and air quality; see Sections 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," and 4.10, "Air Quality," of the Draft EIS/EIR for these impact analyses. Impacts to the wilderness areas are addressed in Section 4.3, "Wilderness," of the Draft EIS/EIR.

Will Hollo

From: mitzi hodges <dssbats@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 8:52 AM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: NO

0078-1 | No, No Tram.
Squaw already exceeds reasonable parking expectations- there is NO place for more people.
Make them address parking first.
The tram is the worst idea so far (besides an indoor water park- remember Blythe Arena fell down from snow).
Do not allow them to desecrate this area for greed please.
Mitzi Hodges

--
Hi! Have a GREAT Day!!
Mitzi

0078-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment is directed towards the project approval process and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. All comment letters submitted during the Draft EIS/EIR public review period will be reviewed and considered by the Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors before a decision on the project is rendered.

0102

Shirlee Herrington

From: Barbara Mackenstadt <bdmacke@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 10:27 AM
To: Placer County Environmental Coordination Services
Subject: No on base station at 5 lakes

0102-1 | When are we going to realize that the Tahoe area is a treasure? By making 5 lakes access easy, we will soon see the graffiti that has spread like a fungus through the summits abandoned train snow sheds.
Unless there is enforcement for vandalism and litter and strict use guidelines, this area will be trashed.
No to the tram. No to this stop on the tram.
Sent from my iPhone

0102-1, Opinion (O1)

Under Alternative 2, the proposed gondola would only provide access to the Five Lakes Trail to skiers, during winter, and access would not be that easy (for additional discussion, see Impact 4.1-1 in the Draft EIS/EIR). This access would only be provided in winter when the gondola is operational (see RPM MUL-4). Regarding the comment that improved access would lead to graffiti and vandalism, this issue was not addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR because it is not an environmental impact required to be analyzed per NEPA or CEQA. Nonetheless, all comment letters submitted during the Draft EIS/EIR public review period will be reviewed and considered by the Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors before a decision on the project is rendered.

Will Hollo

From: Glen Poulsen <skikrazd@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2018 4:11 PM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: Comment on Squaw Alpine Connector Gondola

0143-1 | To Whom it may Cpncern, Regarding the Squaw Alpine Gondola, I am in support of a linkage between the two resorts. I believe that the linkage should be achieved while augmenting uphill transportation on Squaw side of the gondola. I believe that the alignment should follow and replace the existing red dog lift and then progress towards Alpine. This would provide high speed uphill capacity for Red Dog. From the top of red dog the alignment should proceed into the Alpine Village. In lieu of this, Of all the alternatives offered I would favor the furthest east alignment of the gondola or Alternative 4. Thanks for your Attention! Glen Poulsen 380 Grove Street, Tahoe City, CA 96146

0143-1, Opinion (O1)

The comment provides an opinion regarding the merits or qualities of the project and does not address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR. The Forest Supervisor for the TNF and the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the project into consideration when making a decision regarding the project.

0154

Will Hollo

From: jim sajdak <jim@cs3.us>
Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2018 10:46 AM
To: Scoping Comments
Subject: Squaw Valley Gondola

U.S. Forest Service,

0154-1 | I would like to encourage you to visit the proposed site of the gondola project while taking a hike up the Five Lakes Trail. Once standing on the trail you will hopefully have an at god moment with the surrounding beauty of the area and realize the significant impacts that this project will have on the beauty of the environment.

It's not just about the gondola project, it's about the all of the future development right on the boundary of the Granite Chief Wilderness that will follow. Lake Tahoe is very unique; there is one two lane road from Truckee to Squaw Valley. The current traffic on ski weekends backs up to I-80 located 12 miles from the resort. In the Tahoe Basin we have the Lake, a two lane road and a mountain. Again there are no secondary roads. The proposed project with further development already planned will result in more congestion.

Please protect what is left of the Granite Chief Wildness Area and our beautiful environment here in Tahoe by listening to the people that recreate in the Granite Chief Wilderness and not approve the Gondola Project. The only benefit is to KSL and the developers at White Wolf. I can assure you that there aren't lines of skiers and boarders waiting for the gondola to be constructed. The locals who ski at one resort really don't care to ski at the other resort.

The Truckee Sun paper dated April 27, 2018 has an article by Darla Mazzonia, a Forest Service Ranger. The article states "what a treasure Desolation Wilderness is". It's a bit ironic that after reading Darla's article that I am asking the Forest Service to listen to its own ranger and protect our treasure. I encourage you to read the article from one of your own.

Jim Sajdak
 Tahoe City

0154-1, Opinion (O1)

Potential impacts to the Five Lakes Trail and the Granite Chief Wilderness area are addressed in Sections 4.1, "Recreation," 4.2, "Visual Resources," and 4.3, "Wilderness," of the Draft EIS/EIR. Traffic impacts are addressed in Section 4.7, "Transportation and Circulation," of the Draft EIS/EIR. Cumulative effects of the project in connection with other probable future projects (including the proposed White Wolf Development) are evaluated in Sections 4.1 through 4.17 in the Draft EIS/EIR. No specific issues related to the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIS/EIR are raised in this comment. No further response is warranted.

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