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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT EIS/EIR FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

Placer County and the Tahoe National Forest (TNF) have released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project listed below:

PROPOSED PROJECT: **Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project**
 (State Clearinghouse No. 2016042066)

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD: April 27, 2018 to June 11, 2018

PROJECT LOCATION: The project area encompasses parts of the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows operational boundaries, as well as surrounding private lands northwest of Lake Tahoe in Placer County, California. At its closest point, Squaw Valley is approximately 1.2 miles from Alpine Meadows. State Route 89 provides access to both resorts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows are separate ski facilities that are both under ownership of, and operated by, the project proponent, Squaw Valley Ski Holdings (SVSH). The project proposes to install and operate a gondola interconnecting the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows base areas and install eight avalanche mitigation devices (Gazex exploders) at Alpine Meadows.

Four alternatives are analyzed in the Draft EIS/EIR, including a No Action Alternative and three action alternatives that would result in the installation of a base-to-base gondola under different alignments and the installation of Gazex exploders at Alpine Meadows. The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives and would reflect a continuation of existing conditions without changes, additions, or upgrades. With implementation of any of the action alternatives, the base-to-base gondola would range from 11,700 feet to 13,000 feet in length, require 33 to 35 lift towers, two base terminals and two intermediate mid-stations. The gondola would begin on privately owned land at Squaw Valley, traverse the privately owned Caldwell property, and would terminate on National Forest System lands operated under Forest Service Special Use Permit within the Alpine Meadows base area. Construction would occur over a period of approximately six to eight months, including some helicopter usage for placement of towers and presence of approximately 30 to 40 workers on the project site during peak construction periods. Total disturbance, including temporary and permanent ground disturbance, temporary construction disturbance, and overstory vegetation removal, would range from approximately 14.73 acres to 19.87 acres. Resource Protection Measures (RPMs) and mitigation measures are incorporated into all action alternatives to minimize potential environmental impacts from construction and operation of the project.

Implementation of the proposal would require an amendment to the existing Forest Service Special Use Permit issued for the operation and maintenance of Alpine Meadows. The proposal is consistent with the *Alpine Meadows Ski Area Master Development Plan* and passed the screening criteria for consideration to use National Forest System (NFS) lands and amend the existing permit consistent with Forest Service land use regulations. Permitting from Placer County includes a conditional use permit, a re-zone to accommodate the Alpine Meadows base terminal, and a General Plan amendment to the *Squaw Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance* to allow for a new ski lift.

SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The Draft EIS/EIR identified significant or potentially significant effects of one or more of the four alternatives evaluated with respect to visual resources; transportation and circulation; noise; vegetation; wildlife and aquatics; wetlands; soils, geology, and seismicity; and hydrology and water quality. Many

significant effects would be mitigable to less-than-significant levels. However, even with the application of required RPMs and feasible mitigation measures, implementation of one or more of the alternatives would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to visual resources, transportation and circulation, and noise.

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing will be held during the public review period to receive comments on the Draft EIS/EIR:

- Thursday, May 24, 2018, 10:00 a.m. – Placer County Planning Commission Meeting, North Tahoe Events Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach, CA 96143

The Placer County Planning Commission meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m.; however, the proposed project may not be discussed at this exact time. Please refer to the meeting agenda at the following link up to 1 week prior to the meeting for updated information: www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/pchearings. At this public hearing, a presentation about the project will be provided and the public will have an opportunity to speak. Formal public comments will be recorded at this Planning Commission Meeting on May 24th.

WHERE DRAFT EIS/EIR MAY BE REVIEWED: The Draft EIS/EIR is available for review by the public during normal business hours at the following locations:

- Tahoe City Library (740 N. Lake Boulevard, Tahoe City, CA 96145)
- Truckee Library (10031 Levon Avenue, Truckee, CA 96161)
- Placer County (3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603)
- Placer County (775 N. Lake Boulevard, Tahoe City, CA 96145)
- Tahoe National Forest Supervisor's Office (631 Coyote Street, Nevada City, CA 95959)
- Tahoe National Forest Truckee Ranger District (10811 Stockrest Springs Road, Truckee, CA 96161)

The Draft EIS/EIR is also available online at:

- <https://www.squawalpinegondola-eis.com/library/documents>
- <https://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/envcoordsvcs/eir/squawvalleygondolaproject>.

SEND COMMENTS TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

- U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest, Truckee Ranger District
c/o NEPA Contractor
P.O. Box 2729
Frisco, CO 80443
Email: Comments@squawalpinegondola-eis.com
- Placer County Community Development Resources Agency
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190
Auburn, CA 95603
Attention: Shirlee Herrington, Environmental Coordination Services
Email: cdraecs@placer.ca.gov

All comments received by Placer County during the 45-day public comment period will be shared with the Forest Service and responded to in the Final EIS/EIR, and vice versa. Pursuant to 36 CFR 218.25, comments on the Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project Draft EIS/EIR will be accepted for 45 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the Notice of Availability of this document in the Federal Register.

The Notice of Availability for the Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project Draft EIS/EIR is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on April 27, 2018. If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday or Federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day. The publication date of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. You should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments about this proposed project during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official will be eligible to file an objection. Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2). Other eligibility requirements are defined by 36 CFR 218.25(a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project and signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25(a)(4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

Information received in response to this solicitation, including names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, the agency will not be able to provide subsequent documents to people who submit comments anonymously, and they will not have standing to file an objection. It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

For more information on the project, please contact:

- Heather Beckman, Senior Planner, County of Placer – Community Development Resource Agency, at (530) 581-6286; or
- Joe Flannery, Winter Sports Specialist, Tahoe National Forest, at (530) 587 – 3558