



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southwestern
Region

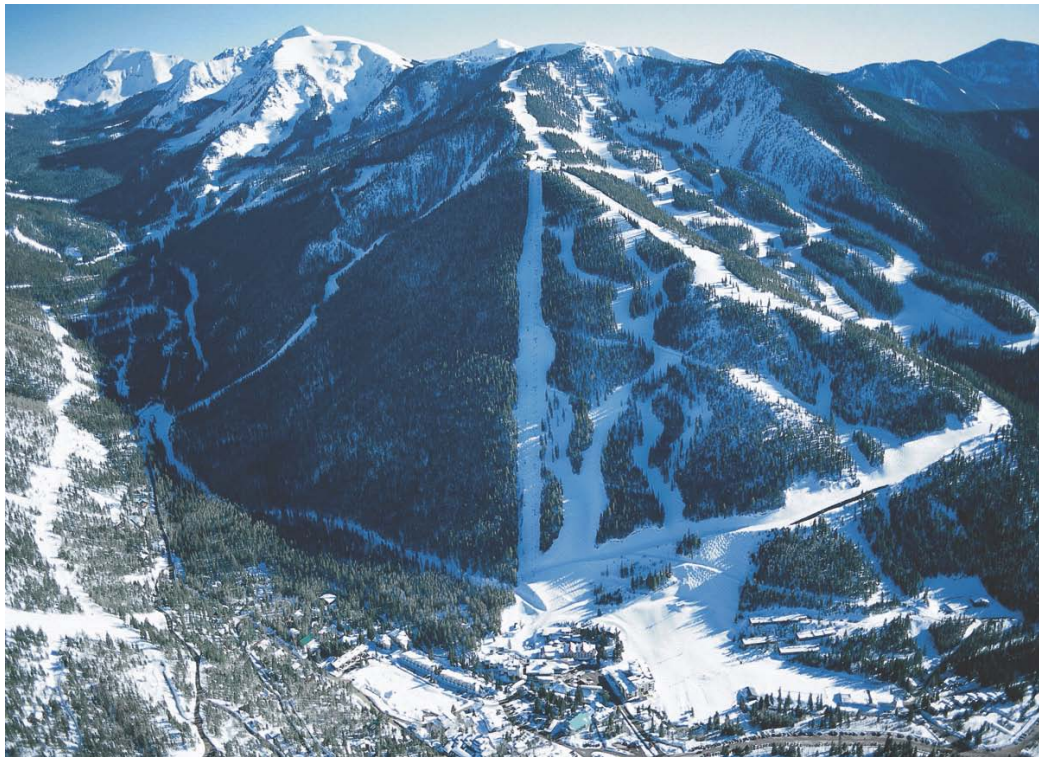
August 2012



Record of Decision

Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan—Phase 1 Projects

**Questa Ranger District
Carson National Forest
Taos County, New Mexico**



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
Printed on recycled paper – August 2012

Record of Decision

Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan—Phase 1 Projects

**Questa Ranger District
Carson National Forest
Taos County, New Mexico**



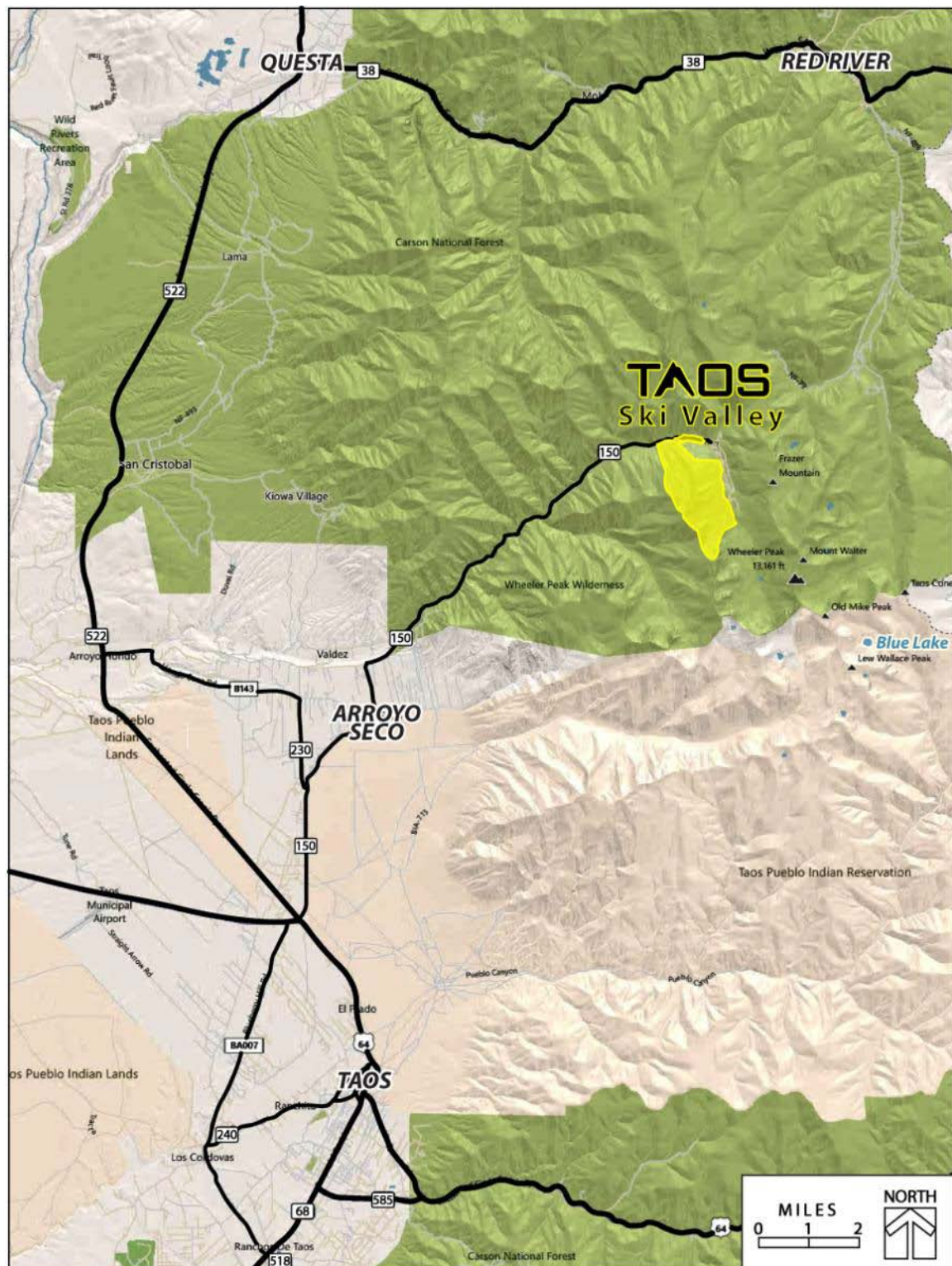


Figure 1. Location of Taos Ski Valley in northern New Mexico

Record of Decision

The United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Questa Ranger District, Carson National Forest) has prepared this record of decision (ROD) and the associated Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan—Phase 1 Projects, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations.¹ The interdisciplinary analysis is documented in the project record.²

This decision applies to the Questa Ranger District (RD), which encompasses approximately 270,000 acres and is a part of the Carson National Forest (NF). The Questa RD is located in north-central New Mexico, about 25 miles north of Taos (figure 1).

Taos Ski Valley (TSV) opened with one lift on private land in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in 1955. By 1957, TSV had expanded operations onto National Forest System (NFS) lands in the Carson NF. Currently, TSV operates under a Forest Service-issued special use permit (SUP or "permit") authorizing the use of NFS lands for the purposes of constructing, operating, and maintaining a winter sports resort, including food services, rentals, retail sales, and other ancillary facilities. The SUP covers 1,268 acres on the Questa RD. An additional 200 acres of private land encompass the remainder of the resort and related operations.³

The 1986 Carson Land and Resource Management Plan,⁴ as amended (referred to as the forest plan), sets forth broad, programmatic management direction for the Carson NF. Where appropriate, this decision tiers to the forest plan Final EIS and record of decision.⁵ This decision is also consistent with applicable forest plan management direction (goals, standards and guidelines).

Decision

I have decided to select and approve alternative 2 – the proposed action (hereby referred to as the selected alternative). All approved projects and activities in the selected alternative are located within TSV's existing 1,268-acre SUP area, administered by the Carson NF and/or on private lands currently owned by TSV. This decision and the EIS considered the best available science. The project record demonstrates a thorough review of relevant scientific information. This decision amends TSV's SUP to allow the following projects to be implemented within the permit area:

New Lifts

Main Street Lift

My decision to approve lift service on Kachina Peak (figure 2) authorizes TSV to:

- Construct a 2,560-foot long fixed-grip, triple chairlift, with a capacity of approximately 1,200 people-per-hour (pph). The lower terminal will be located on a raised rock outcrop (11,340 feet in elevation), just below the base of the hill that leads into *Hunziker Bowl*. The upper

¹ 40 CFR 1500-1508; 36 CFR 220; FSH 1909.15.

² An index of the project record is an appendix to this record of decision.

³ The 40-year SUP was renewed in 2004 and expires in 2044.

⁴ USDA 1986c

⁵ USDA 1986a & b

terminal will be on a natural bench, below the ridgeline of Kachina Peak (at approximately 12,450 feet in elevation). Depending on the final engineering design for the lift, approximately ten 40- to 60-foot towers will be needed (each tower will have temporary and permanent ground disturbance, which has been accounted for in the Water, Wetlands and Soils Resources section in chapter 3 of the Final EIS). By design, this will be a low capacity lift, in accordance with the type and amount of terrain that it will serve. In addition, TSV may increase spacing between chairs to maintain a comfortable number of people on the terrain.

- Remove 1.6 acres of spruce-fir trees for the Main Street Lift lower terminal and lift alignment. Merchantable timber will be removed from the site. Non-merchantable timber may be used for understory structural habitat near cleared edges, with excess piled and burned.
- Construct a small (roughly 250 square feet) ski patrol facility into the top terminal infrastructure in order to provide room for staff, lift maintenance personnel, medical equipment, and other gear. This facility will not be any taller than the top terminal of the lift.
- Bury a power line within an existing maintenance road (*Easy Trip*) from the top terminal of Lift 4 to the bottom terminal of the Main Street Lift, using a vibrating plow to minimize soil disturbance.
- Incorporate approximately 1,100 vertical feet (63 acres) of existing expert terrain into TSV's lift network and trail system. No new trails will be developed.

Ridge Lift

My decision to approve lift service on West Basin Ridge (figure 2) authorizes TSV to:

- Construct an 800-foot long fixed grip, triple chairlift with a capacity of approximately 1,200 pph. The lower terminal will be located in West Basin, below the top of Lift 8 (11,160 feet in elevation). The upper terminal will be on West Basin Ridge (11,700 feet in elevation).
- Remove 0.7 acre of trees for the Ridge Lift lower and upper terminals and lift alignment. Merchantable timber will be removed from the site and non-merchantable timber may be used for understory structural habitat near cleared edges, with excess piled and burned.
- Bury a power line within an existing maintenance road from the top terminal of Lift 8 to the bottom terminal of the Ridge Lift, using a vibrating plow to minimize soil disturbance.
- Incorporate approximately 550 vertical feet (22 acres) of existing expert terrain into TSV's lift network and trail system; no new trails will be constructed.

Note: Although the approved Main Street and Ridge lifts will provide lift access to areas on Kachina Peak and West Basin Ridge, the existing hiking routes will be maintained for those who value the sense of accomplishment and vigor associated with the hike itself.

Glades

Wild West Glades

The Wild West Glades will be hike-to accessible from the top of Lift 2 and lift-served accessible from the approved Ridge Lift. My approval of glading in West Basin (figure 2) authorizes TSV to:

- Thin approximately 31.6 acres of spruce-fir trees from the top of West Basin Ridge to *Lower Stauffenberg*. Thinning will create navigable openings among the trees (averaging 20 to 60 feet), to form skiable lines running down the slope.
- Provide additional terrain for advanced intermediate and expert skiers.

Minnesotas Glades

The Minnesotas Glades will be accessible from the bottom of Lift 7 area. My approval of glading in the Minnesotas Glades (figure 2) authorizes TSV to:

- Thin approximately 40.3 acres of spruce-fir trees, with varying percentages of tree removal (between 10 and 50 percent of existing trees). Spaces between tree clumps left in place will range from 20 to 60 feet, forming skiable lines running down the slope.
- Provide skiable terrain appropriate for expert skiers and riders.

Thinning activities will occur gradually over a 5-year period, with small diameter dead and dying trees being removed first, and additional trees removed over time to create skiable terrain. Within the gladed areas, thinning will not occur evenly; trees and clumps of trees will be thinned to an average spacing of 20 to 60 feet, to create a skiable terrain between standing trees extending down the fall-line of the slope. Most of the trees to be removed will be smaller than 10 inches in diameter-at-breast-height (dbh). For safety, all existing hazard trees will be removed from the gladed areas. Trees that have high potential to fall due to lean angle, exposed roots, or broken crowns are considered hazard trees. It is likely some hazard trees could occur adjacent to the approved gladed ski runs and may need to be removed if they have the potential to fall into the gladed ski run.

Tree felling in both areas will be performed by hand, using chainsaws. No heavy equipment will be used. Trees will be lopped and scattered throughout the gladed area. Some felled trees may be used for understory structural habitat near cleared edges, with excess piled and burned.

Note: In conjunction with implementation of the approved glades, TSV will work with the Carson NF specialist to assemble a glading plan that is responsive to both the resort's operational/recreational needs, as well as the Carson NF's forest health objectives. The glading plan, which will resemble the plan assembled for the *North American Glade*, will address elements such as, but not limited to, species and size selection, tree mortality (i.e., targeting dead/dying trees), percent removal, and habitat characteristics.

Lift Replacements

Lift 4 (Kachina Lift)

My approval of the Lift 4 replacement in Kachina Basin (figure 2) authorizes TSV to:

- Replace the existing Lift 4 (a fixed-grip quad installed in 1991) with a detachable quad chairlift.
- Grade 0.7 acre at the top and bottom terminal locations to accommodate larger terminals. Lift 4 will remain in the same alignment and the same top and bottom terminal locations will be used. Taos Ski Valley will attempt to reuse tower footers, but the EIS analysis accounts for new disturbance for all towers nonetheless.

- Increase the capacity from 1,800 pph to 2,400 pph.
- Reduce lift ride times from 10 to 4.5 minutes.

Lift 5 (High Five Lift)

My approval of the Lift 5 replacement at the base area (figure 2) authorizes TSV to:

- Replace Lift 5 (a fixed-grip double installed in 1973) with a high-speed detachable quad chairlift.
- Grade 1.2 acres at the top and bottom terminal locations to accommodate larger terminals. Lift 5 will remain in the same alignment and the top and bottom terminal locations will be used. Taos Ski Valley will attempt to reuse tower footers, but the EIS analysis does account for new disturbance for all towers.
- Increase the capacity from 1,200 pph to approximately 2,400 pph. This will substantially increase out-of-base capacity and reduce the need for operating lifts 1 and 5 simultaneously.
- Reduce lift ride times from 7.5 minutes to 3.5 minutes.

Lift 7 (Maxie's Lift)

My approval of the Lift 7 replacement up *Maxie's* run (figure 2) authorizes TSV to:

- Replace Lift 7 (a fixed-grip triple installed in 1984) with a fixed-grip quad chairlift.
- Grade 0.9 acre at the top and bottom terminal locations to accommodate larger terminals. Lift 7 will remain in the same alignment and the top and bottom terminal locations will be used. Taos Ski Valley will attempt to reuse tower footers, but the EIS analysis does account for new disturbance for all towers.
- The hourly lift capacity will not change.

Snowtubing Center

The approved Snowtubing Center on *Strawberry Hill* (figure 3) will:

- Develop a dedicated snowtubing facility near Lift 3—partially on private lands (0.8 acre) and partially on NFS lands (0.7 acre), within TSV's existing SUP area. The Snowtubing Center will include four distinct lanes, varying from 250 to 280 feet long, separated by snow berms. A roughly 250-foot long carpet conveyor lift will bring tubers from the run-out back to the top.
- Form tubing lanes using machine made snow. Taos Ski Valley will extend (on private land) existing snowmaking lines from Lift 3.
- Accommodate approximately 90 guests per hour.
- Install a low-level lighting system to allow TSV to offer snowtubing into the evening.
- Remove trees and grade approximately 0.5 acre of NFS lands to create run outs for the snowtubing lanes.

- Use the existing access over the Rio Hondo, between the parking lot and the Pit House, to accommodate pedestrian access, as well as construction and maintenance vehicles accessing the Snowtubing Center.
- Provide parking at existing parking lots for users of the approved Snowtubing Center. A number of parking spaces in TSV's Armadillo lot will likely be reserved for snowtubers.

Taos Ski Valley holds sufficient water rights to add the Snowtubing Center to its snowmaking system. Snowmaking coverage on 1.5 acres of terrain would require a total of roughly 2.3 acre feet of water each season. The existing Pit House (located between *Strawberry Hill* and the Children's Center) will continue to function as a warming hut, providing guest services and restrooms to snowtubers, as well as skiers and snowboarders.

Adventure Center (Snowshoeing)

The approved Adventure Center for snowshoeing opportunities will begin near the Little Maintenance Facility in the northeast portion of the existing SUP area (figure 3). It will:

- Create trails over the snow once sufficient snow coverage is available. Clearing of some downfall and some specific trees measuring less than 4 inches diameter may be removed to lay out the trail. The snowshoe trails will be designed to accommodate up to 75 guests at-one-time. Guest services will be located in the nearby Pit House.
- Provide parking at existing parking lots for users of the Adventure Center. A limited number of parking spaces in TSV's Deer lot will likely be reserved for snowshoers. Visitors who want to snowshoe will walk to the trailhead.

The approved Adventure Center will offer a designated and marked interpretive trail system (one main loop trail with interconnecting segments) for snowshoeing, to further supplement winter activities at TSV. Interpretive signage will be installed/removed seasonally to provide TSV with flexibility to modify the trail as needed.

Mountain Bike Trail

The approved lift-served Mountain Bike Trail (figure 2) will:

- Develop a trail that is approximately 3.6 miles and 24 inches wide, between the top of Lift 1 and the base area. About 1.7 acres of ground disturbance is possible.
- Remove and limb a minimal number of trees on new trail segments to create a 24-inch tread width. Trees will be lopped and scattered or removed from the site.
- Strategically locate switchbacks on naturally occurring benches and place bike trail segments in areas currently cleared for ski trails.
- Avoid conflicts with mountain operations vehicles by using old access roads where possible and generally locating the trail away from the existing maintenance roads, to the degree possible.

Cyclists will be able to ride Lift 1 and descend this trail during TSV's summer operation period. They can use any portion of the old road beds in the upper section. With an average grade of 8.5 percent, this trail is designed to minimize the need for pedaling and braking to provide a fun experience for riders of intermediate ability levels.

Resort Access

East Guest Drop-Off Area

The approved East Guest Drop-off Area (figure 3) will:

- Create a new guest drop-off area on Thunderbird Road.
- Realign the existing footbridge to provide better access from the approved East Guest Drop-Off Area to Alpine Village businesses.

Note: Sutton Place Road will continue to provide vehicular access for guests staying at Edelweiss, Snakedance, and Hotel St. Bernard.

Parking Lot Reconfiguration

The approved parking lot reconfiguration will:

- Reconfigure the eastern portion of TSV's day parking lots (i.e., Armadillo, Bison, and Bear) to allow Bison to become a thoroughfare primarily for residents of the Village of Taos Ski Valley driving to Twining Road, and access to the East Guest Drop-Off Area.
- Construct an extra parking area north of Armadillo to alleviate the loss of parking on Bison.
- Remove 1.4 acres of trees and grade 3.0 acres to accommodate additional parking and improvements to the entry road (i.e., where Highway 150 meets the parking lots).
- Re-grade 9.9 acres of the existing parking lot to improve vehicular access to the new East Guest Drop-Off Area and circulation through the parking lots.

Required Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices

All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted. In order to minimize or avoid potential impacts to the human and biological environment, the decision to approve alternative 2 incorporates all mitigation measures and best management practices (BMPs) included in Table 1 (this table is included in pages 25 – 30 of the Final EIS). The mitigation measures were designed by the Forest Service and specialists involved in the EIS analysis. The bulk of the mitigation measures are considered common management practices historically used by ski area managers in alpine and sub-alpine environments, to prevent or decrease potential resource impacts. They are highly effective methods that can be planned in advance and adapted to site conditions, as needed. In response to comments from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) regarding water quality, additional modeling was completed to ensure the BMPs identified in the Final EIS for water, wetlands, and soils resources would be effective at reducing nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment loading to the Rio Hondo. The application of mitigation measures was assumed when environmental effects were analyzed. The application of mitigation measures will be monitored by Forest Service personnel during and after project implementation.

Table 1. Mitigation measures applied to the decision, by resource

Required Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices	
Recreation	
Maintain existing available hiking routes on Highline and West Basin ridges.	
Maintain a closure, as appropriate, to prevent people from riding the Main Street Lift and skiing/riding down to Highline Ridge.	
Parking and Traffic Circulation	
When possible, avoid any construction during the winter.	
Visual Quality	
During new lift installation, glading, and mountain bike and snowshoe trail development, cut stumps as low as possible to the ground	
Bury all utilities.	
As per Forest Service Handbook (FSH) No. 617, “National Forest Landscape Management for Ski Areas,” meet reflectivity guidelines for all proposed facilities. This includes any reflective surfaces (metal, glass, plastics, or other materials with smooth surfaces) that do not blend with the natural environment. They will be covered, painted, stained, chemically treated, etched, sandblasted, corrugated, or otherwise treated to meet the solar reflectivity standards.	
As per FSH No. 617, “National Forest Landscape Management for Ski Areas,” use recommended colors for ski areas on all proposed facilities. Bright colors are inappropriate for the forest setting. The colors will be muted, subdued colors to blend well with the natural color scheme.”b	
Cultural and Heritage Resources	
Although site-specific surveys have been conducted, if undocumented historic and/or prehistoric properties are located during ground disturbing activities or planning activities associated with approved construction activities, they will be treated as specified in 36 CFR 800.11 concerning Properties Discovered During Implementation of an Undertaking.	
Install orange safety fencing around designated archaeological sites to protect from ground-disturbing construction activities.	
Air Quality	
To the extent practicable, promptly install site improvements and revegetate disturbed areas.	
As necessary and practical, water down any exposed soil caused by grading (e.g., lift terminal and snowtubing runout areas)	
Keep slash piles for burning less than 15 feet in diameter and 6 feet high.	
Obtain New Mexico Environmental Department Air Quality Bureau permit for any slash disposed through burning.	
Wildlife	
New lift installation, lift replacement and glading should begin after June 1 to reduce potential of disturbance on black bear maternity sites and squirrel middens in the area. Avoid areas with obvious migratory bird nest activity as required by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.	
Prior to glading, survey the area for red squirrel activity and identify red squirrel middens. Do	

Required Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices
not remove or trim the lower branches of trees within a 25-foot radius of a midden and retain large, downed logs within a 50-foot radius, unless there is a potential hazard to skiers.
Within gladed runs, try to retain 3 snags per acre greater than 10 to 12 inches dbh, unless there is a potential hazard to skiers.
Where there are clumps of aspen in the gladed runs, try to retain aspen snags greater than 10 inches dbh, unless there is a potential hazard to skiers.
Within gladed runs, try to retain standing dead and down trees greater than 8 inches in diameter, within a 30-foot radius of a spring or seep, unless there potential hazard to skiers.
Try to retain downed logs in the gladed runs, unless there is a potential hazard to skiers.
Vegetation
Survey the top terminal site for Lift 4 replacement and the Main Street Lift alignment for Pecos fleabane and alpine larkspur, prior to ground disturbance. Avoid if technically possible.
When determining what trees to retain in gladed runs, retain aspen over conifers; Douglas-fir over Engelmann spruce; and Engelmann spruce over subalpine (corkbark fir).
When determining what trees to retain in gladed runs, choose trees with healthy crowns. Remove spruce budworm or beetle weakened trees and trees with unhealthy crowns.
Thin conifers less than 5 inches dbh.
Aduquately mark the edges of the gladed areas, prior to tree cutting.
Buck Engelmann spruce trees greater than 5 inches dbh to 3-foot lengths, at time of tree felling. Burn or remove excessive amounts within 12 months.
Monitor slash density and do not leave more than 40 tons/acre fuels on the ground at one time.
Noxious Weeds
Clean construction equipment prior to entering the TSV SUP area. Clean equipment when returning to the area.
Prior to and during project construction, treat for noxious weeds along travel routes accessing the project area on NFS lands. Travel routes include ski area access roads.
Monitor and treat any existing or new infestations of noxious weeds for a minimum of 3 years after project completion.
Soil, Water, Aquatic, and Wetland Resources
Best management practices will be applied for all ground disturbing activities to avoid sediment migration from ground disturbance into wetlands.
A Storm Water Pollution and Prevention Plan will be developed prior to implementation of the Snowtubing Center and Parking Reconfiguration activities. This plan will be approved by the appropriate Forest Service specialist.
Store fuel, oil, and other hazardous materials in structures placed on impermeable surfaces with impermeable berms designed to fully contain the hazardous material plus accumulated precipitation for a period at least equal to that required to mitigate a spill.
Keep heavy equipment out of the Rio Hondo.

Required Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices
Identify and flag any wetlands proximate to areas where disturbance will occur from construction related activities. Construction limits will be clearly defined and any identified wetlands will be avoided where possible.
Avoid soil-disturbing activities during periods of heavy rain or wet soils.
Implement any work within or directly adjacent to stream channels and wetlands when hydrologic flows are reduced (late-summer and early fall).
Where possible, use existing maintenance roads for construction and routine maintenance of the proposed project components.
In all areas where grading or soil disturbance will occur, topsoil or other organic amendment will be stockpiled and respread following slope grading and prior to reseeded.
Maintain vegetation buffers adjacent to intermittent or perennial drainages and wetlands, to the extent possible. Where avoidance is not possible, appropriate erosion control practices (i.e., silt fences or straw wattles) will be employed.
After construction activities, use surface netting, in conjunction with mulching.
Do not create slash piles near the Rio Hondo or other perennial or intermittent streams.
Lay felled trees across the riparian zone at 20 to 45 degrees to the stream channel.
Design and construct water bars to discharge surface runoff originating from proposed ski trails into well-vegetated areas.
In gladed areas, maintain existing organic cover during thinning and slash treatment. If disturbance to the organic cover occurs, replace the disturbance with slash or material from an adjacent layer.
Use mechanical subsoiling or scarification of areas determined to have been compacted by construction activities.
Re-establish effective ground cover upon completion of ground disturbing activities (mulch, scatter slash) at levels that occurred prior to disturbance.
Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas with native plant seed. Seed mixtures and mulches will be noxious weed-free. Non-persistent, non-native perennials or sterile perennials may be used immediately after implementation, while native perennials become established. The Forest Service must approve the certified weed-free seed mixtures prior to implementation.

Rationale for the Decision

This decision best meets the purpose and need to improve the quality of the recreation experience and increase recreational opportunities within TSV's permit area, so TSV can reclaim its competitive standing in the Rocky Mountain region (Final EIS, pp. 3-6). Through offering a higher quality recreational experience within its permit area, TSV would be positioned to increase annual skier/rider visitation, thereby remaining a viable provider of developed recreational opportunities on the Carson NF and in the Rocky Mountain market.⁶

⁶ Refer to the Recreation and Social and Economic Environment sections in chapter 3 of the Final EIS for an in depth discussion of visitation and competitive market.

Main Street and Ridge Lifts

The Main Street and Ridge Lifts will meet the need of improving lift service to high alpine advanced intermediate and expert terrain within the permit area (Final EIS, p. 4). Alternatives 1 and 3 do not authorize any additional lifts; thus, they do not meet the need for extending lift-served opportunities within TSV's permit boundary. The concept for a lift on Kachina Peak can be traced back to Ernie Blake in 1965, with numerous references in years since. The new Main Street Lift will provide lift-served access to popular expert terrain that currently receives moderate use by skiers and riders willing to hike to get to the *Main Street* area. The new Ridge Lift will provide lift-served access to Wild West Glades, which will offer new advanced-intermediate terrain within the permit boundary.

The most controversial of the proposed projects for the Taos community and among TSV's devoted following are the Main Street and Ridge Lifts. These projects will change the hike-to experience at TSV. Under the selected alternative, approximately 77 acres of hike-to terrain on Kachina Peak (*Hunziker*, *Main Street*, and *K1* through *K5 Chutes*) will become lift-served, as well as a portion of hike-to terrain on West Basin Ridge. Hike-to terrain accessed from Highline Ridge will be unaffected by the installation of either the Main Street or Ridge Lifts.

The proposed Main Street Lift elicited passionate comments from both sides. Some felt access to Kachina Peak needed to remain a hiking-only experience that one had to work for in order to be rewarded with a good run down *Main Street*, *Hunziker Bowl*, or one of the *K Chutes*. Some thought the lift would provide easy public access to Taos Pueblo lands and Wheeler Peak Wilderness. Others contended the lift would negatively affect wilderness characteristics and wildlife, such as resident Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and white-tailed ptarmigan.

On the contrary, people had strong opinions that TSV must gain back the reputation it once had among ski resorts in the Rockies. One commenter wrote, "Taos Ski Valley, as an established world-renowned ski resort, has not kept up with the expectations and needs of the skiing public, in general in search of more terrain, better access, to go higher, to offer more scenery, earlier and later season. We are very lucky in our mountains of New Mexico to be able to offer scenery and terrain as good, if not better than the most famous resorts in the Alps." Some people felt the proposed Main Street Lift would offer more time for skiing/riding the slopes of Kachina Peak, rather than spending it hiking. Others thought the Main Street Lift would give good skiers and riders a chance to experience the top of Kachina Peak, despite having chronic breathing conditions, such as asthma, or health problems related to coming from low elevations.

My decision to approve the Main Street and Ridge Lifts will decrease hike-to only terrain at TSV by approximately 52 percent. As discussed in the Recreation analysis of the Final EIS, it is estimated on any given day, approximately 20 percent of TSV's guests engage in some form of hiking along West Basin or Highline ridges, with considerably less (20% of all hikers) making the effort to summit Kachina Peak. Most hikers do not go further south on Highline Ridge than *Cabin Chute*.⁷ To quantify this, on a typical weekend day with around 2,000 skiers/riders at TSV, roughly 400 would be expected to hike along the West Basin and/or Highline Ridges, and approximately 80 guests may summit Kachina Peak (conditions warranting). Even though people will be impacted by the approved Main Street and Ridge Lifts, the hiking route from Highline

⁷ This section up to Cabin Chute would remain hike-to only.

Ridge to the summit of Kachina Peak and along Highline Ridge will remain unchanged for those who enjoy the physical exertion of hiking from the top of Lift 2.

The Final EIS provides information about Forest Service and TSV consultation with Taos Pueblo. Both the Forest Service and TSV have had and continue to have meetings with Tribal officials to discuss and manage issues that may arise from operations on lands surrounding the Pueblo, including potential trespass issues. In addition, the Final EIS explains the lift would not run in the summer for public access (p. 77), as TSV did not intend to provide summer lift access to this area. The distance and topography between TSV and Tribal lands would discourage access onto Tribal lands, as would a communication strategy for guests and resort operations to avoid trespassing issues.

While I am aware my decision to approve the Main Street and Ridge Lifts will affect a portion of TSV's guests who value the hike-to only experience, I am confident TSV – which has been owned by the Blake family since 1955 – understands both current trends in the ski industry and the needs/expectations of its clientele. As previously mentioned, the ski industry is evolving, and TSV has been slow to keep up with current trends. In the same regard, I trust TSV understands its opportunities and constraints well enough to know if lift serving some of its renowned hike-to terrain is good for its recreational experience and business. In addition, the Final EIS discloses that the environmental impacts on wildlife (particularly white-tailed ptarmigan and bighorn sheep), vegetation, watershed, and visual quality are minimal, and recreational and social impacts are recognized and analyzed.

Wild West and Minnesotas Glades

Alternatives 2 and 3 both meet the need of improving access to treed portions of the existing SUP area, since they both include the development of Wild West and Minnesotas Glades (Final EIS, p. 4). Alternative 2 includes the Ridge Lift, which will also provide lift service to the Wild West Glades. Lift service to new advanced intermediate terrain in alternative 2 will better address the need than no lift service in alternative 3. Alternative 1 does not change the existing trail network; therefore, it does not meet the need. Throughout the existing permit area there are examples of undeveloped terrain, including glades, chutes, and steeps, that are either accessible from within TSV's developed lift and trail network or by hiking. Some of these areas are underutilized because they are heavily treed and either too tight or difficult for a large segment of TSV's clientele to use. Improving access to and use of heavily treed portions of the existing permit area will more effectively make use of skiable terrain that is currently underutilized.

Most commenters were supportive of the two proposed glades. A few commenters wanted assurance that there will be no negative impacts to wildlife, such as bighorn sheep, American marten, and Canada lynx. The Vegetation and Wildlife Resources of chapter 3 (pp. 139-194) discloses the effects on animal and plant species, which were largely beneficial.

Snowtubing Center, Adventure Center, and Mountain Bike Trail

Quality, alternative winter activities that compliment traditional skiing and riding are needed at TSV (Final EIS, pp. 4-5). The Snowtubing Center and snowshoeing at the Adventure Center will provide other winter opportunities within TSV's permit area. Snowtubing is currently a popular winter activity at TSV. After lifts close, guests can rent snowtubes on *Strawberry Hill*, walk up the hill carrying their tubes, and descend (sometimes waiting long periods for their turn). The Snowtubing Center will offer snowtubing throughout the day and evening, without interrupting

skiers and riders on *Strawberry Hill*. Providing snowtubing into the evening will benefit overnight guests and day skiers/riders who wish to extend their day. It will be an amenity that has a demand at TSV, as demonstrated by the number of guests who currently use *Strawberry Hill* for snowtubing.

As approved, the snowtubing lanes will be within the Rio Hondo's riparian zone. The Final EIS analyzes and discloses that impacts to 0.14 acre of wetland will be necessary to construct the snowtubing lanes, and additional manmade snow will be required to cover tubing lanes each season. A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit would be required prior to wetland impacts. I carefully reviewed the Water, Wetlands, and Soil Resources section of the Final EIS and I have concluded impacts to water quality will be minimized by the use of BMPs and will not cause the Rio Hondo to exceed its total maximum daily load (TMDL) for nitrogen and phosphorus.

Snowshoeing is not currently offered at TSV, but represents an opportunity for a low impact, added amenity for guests, who seek other forms of winter recreation in a forested setting. Alternatives 1 and 3 do not include the Snowtubing Center; therefore, they do not meet the need as well as alternative 2.

Due to its elevation, climate, and existing infrastructure, TSV has the potential to provide a variety of summer recreational activities (Final EIS, pp. 4-5). Currently, summer activities at TSV are limited to special events and chairlift rides on Lift 1. Both alternatives 2 and 3 would have allowed a mountain bike trail system within TSV's permit area. Lift-served mountain biking is an opportunity TSV could easily and effectively offer to existing and potential summer clientele (both visitors and locals). The vast majority of comments were supportive of the Adventure Center and Mountain Bike Trail proposed in alternatives 2 and 3.

Lift Replacements

Taos Ski Valley's antiquated lift network needs improvement (Final EIS, p. 5). The replacement of Lifts 5, 4, and 7 is designed to upgrade the existing lift network. Taos Ski Valley's entire lift network is composed of fixed-grip chairlifts, with the exception of three surface conveyors on teaching terrain in the base area. Replacing Lifts 5, 4, and 7 will increase out-of-base capacity, improve operational efficiencies of the lift network, and increase utilization of some of TSV's most popular terrain, namely the Lift 4 and Lift 7 pods. The lift replacements will meet the need for improving the efficiency and utilization of TSV's existing lift system and providing more opportunity for guests to ski and ride the trails, for which the ski area is so well-known. Only supportive comments were received regarding lift replacements proposed in alternatives 2 and 3.

East Guest Drop-Off Area

The East Guest Drop-off area on Thunderbird Road meets the need for an easier pedestrian access route from the shuttle drop-off to skier services and Lift 1/Lift 5 (Final EIS, pp. 5-6). It will be designed to provide a visual orientation to the lifts and the core village as seen from the shuttles. This is important to the sense of arrival for any resort. It will also eliminate the elevation difference (approx. 30 feet) between the drop-off area and Lifts 1 and 5.

During scoping, concerns were raised by owners of businesses in Alpine Village. They felt the proposed drop-off area would divert potential clients from walking through Alpine Village shops. TSV representatives and the owner of Alpine Village came to an agreement to add the realignment of the existing foot-bridge connecting the parking lots to Alpine Village to alternative

2. This will provide direct access to the businesses in Alpine Village from the proposed East Drop-Off Area. Also, pedestrians will have the option to continue using the path parallel to Sutton Place Road to access the base area or access the base area through the new East Guest Drop-Off Area. Alternative 2 meets the need for improving resort access at Taos Ski Valley Resort. Neither alternatives 1 or 3 address this need.

Since the pedestrian bridge to Alpine Village will be realigned to provide access to shops from the drop-off area, most comments received on the Draft EIS were supportive of the East Guest Drop-off Area proposed in alternative 2.

Parking Lot Reconfiguration

Reconfiguring the parking lots will meet the need for better traffic circulation throughout TSV's day lots (for both guests and residents), including providing specific areas for day parking and direct routes to the drop-off area, the base area, local businesses, overnight lodging facilities, and private residences (Final EIS, p. 6). Currently traffic circulation through TSV's parking areas is encumbered by the nature of the long, narrow lots, particularly in the eastern lots closest to the base area. This is mostly problematic for residents who must drive through these lots to reach Twining Road, since there is no thoroughfare. The selected alternative will improve parking efficiency and traffic flow by reconfiguring the eastern day parking lots (Armadillo, Bear, Bison, and Coyote) to better accommodate traffic circulation and pedestrian access to the base area.

Some comments received on the Draft EIS expressed concern of an ongoing operational issue with snow removal and disposal from the parking lots and surrounding roads. Although TSV cannot control private road snow removal throughout the Village of Taos Ski Valley, they are committed to working with the Forest Service to identify appropriate best management practices for snow removal and disposal within the existing SUP area and parking areas to minimize sediment transport to the Rio Hondo.

In addition, several people, and the NMED, raised concerns regarding the impacts the parking lot reconfiguration would have on the Rio Hondo's water quality. As a result, additional analysis was conducted between the Draft and Final EIS to model the application of BMPs and ensure they minimized impacts to the Rio Hondo, particularly related to TMDLs that have been established for nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment inputs. Finally, the Forest Service added information to the Final EIS pertaining to the existing condition of the watershed, including the efforts that have occurred over the last 8 years to improve water quality in the Rio Hondo. I have reviewed the additional documentation found in the Water, Wetlands, and Soil Resources section of the Final EIS and conclude the effects of the parking lot reconfiguration will be minimized by the use of BMPs and will not cause the Rio Hondo to exceed its total maximum daily load, individually or cumulatively.

In addition, an appendix has been added to the Final EIS identifying components of the Snow Storage and Removal Plan for the parking lot reconfiguration, to minimize sediment transport from the reconfigured parking lot to the Rio Hondo and nearby wetlands (Final EIS, appendix E). Requirements to comply with Section 402 of the Clean Water Act National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit program will include developing a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The parking lot reconfiguration will meet applicable standards and guidelines included in the 1986 Carson Forest Plan for Riparian Areas, Watershed Resource and Recreation Sites (Final EIS, p. 118) through compliance with appropriate permitting and implementation of BMPs incorporated into the Action Alternatives.

Summary

The selected alternative will meet the purpose and need for action by improving recreational experiences and opportunities within TSV's permit area on the Carson NF. I am confident that, collectively, the projects approved in the selected alternative will help TSV to reclaim its competitive standing in the Rocky Mountain region. My decision was made after thoroughly considering the purpose and need (pp. 3-6), issues (pp. 10-13), alternatives (pp. 15-34), and effects analyses (pp. 35-196) presented in Final EIS and project record, as well as the public and agency comments submitted throughout the NEPA process. I also took into consideration that TSV's SUP area is within the Carson forest plan's Management Area 16 – Recreation Sites, which is allocated to specifically be managed for developed recreation. Ultimately, my decision to approve alternative 2 was based on weighing the demonstrated recreational and economic benefits associated with TSV, and the effects to the biological and human environment (as disclosed in the Final EIS) that are associated with the approved projects.

I considered TSV's past, present, and future as a permittee on the Carson NF. As discussed in the Final EIS (p. 39), TSV's annual skier/rider visitation has fluctuated over the last 2 decades, with a declining trend. In the midst of its overall decline in annual skier/rider visitation during the late 1990s and the 2000s, TSV has not added any terrain or invested in significant capital improvements that would lead to an improved recreational experience. In the process, TSV has lost much of the brand recognition it had in the 1970s and 1980s, as destination guests looked elsewhere to resorts that have been investing in terrain and infrastructural improvements.

I also considered what makes TSV special. Taos Ski Valley is indeed unique in the ski industry, where it is renowned for steep, adventurous terrain, and uncrowded slopes. The ski area's abundance of "undeveloped" terrain has truly defined its niche in a competitive and constantly evolving ski industry. Furthermore, TSV's unique offering of in-bounds, hike-to terrain compliments its reputation for steeps and chutes. This reputation goes back to 1955, when TSV opened and visitors began hiking West Basin Ridge, Highline Ridge, and Kachina Peak.

In addition, I am aware of the importance of water and water quality to the residents of northern New Mexico. Rural communities depend on water for irrigation and consumption. The analysis for Water, Wetlands, and Soils Resources section of the Final EIS has been supplemented with more information and analysis of the effectiveness of best management practices (BMPs) at maintaining water quality in the Rio Hondo. Additional modeling completed between the Draft and Final EIS shows any increased erosion, runoff, and sedimentation due to the approved projects can be addressed through the application of BMPs analyzed in the Final EIS (pp. 126-135) and required in this decision (pp. 8-9). Furthermore, additional water diversions required for snowmaking on the Snowtubing Center are within TSV's current water rights, no additional water rights would be required for the selected alternative.

I also recognize the cultural significance of the Carson NF to Native American tribes. As discussed in more detail below, the Taos Pueblo expressed concern about potential trespass onto nearby tribal lands as a result of the Main Street Lift. I am confident these concerns were adequately and appropriately addressed in the Final EIS.

Finally, impacts to federally-listed threatened, and endangered species, as well as sensitive species identified by the Regional Forester (which include State of New Mexico threatened and endangered species) have been adequately documented. Additional information was incorporated in the Final EIS.

Public Involvement

The Carson NF initially published a notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register* (75 FR 71414-15) for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan—Phase 1 Projects on November 23, 2010. As part of the public involvement process for the Draft EIS, the agency mailed a scoping notice in December 2010 to approximately 309 community residents, interested individuals, public agencies, tribal officials, and other organizations. The scoping package provided a brief description of the proposed action, purpose and need, preliminary issues raised, and an illustrative map. It was specifically designed to elicit comments, concerns, and issues pertaining to the proposed action. The documents in the scoping package were posted on the Carson NF's website. An email address was provided for submitting electronic comments. The Forest Service received approximately 45 letters with comments on the proposed action during scoping.

Based on public comments received during the scoping period and further consideration by TSV representatives, it was determined the proposed action needed to be modified. The modification related to a different location for the proposed snowtubing facility—from NFS lands, across from the Village of Taos Ski Valley's wastewater treatment plant, to an area partially on private lands, in the base area. An updated NOI was subsequently published in the *Federal Register* on September 29, 2011 (76 FR 60451).

Using the comments from the public, other agencies, and tribes, the interdisciplinary team developed a list of issues to be addressed in the Draft EIS (Final EIS, pp. 10-14). Three significant issues related to the proposed new lifts, the new Snowtubing Center, and new resort access generated alternative 3, which did not include any of these projects.

A notice of availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on January 13, 2012 (77 FR 2012-570). A 45-day comment period followed. Public meetings, using an open house format, were held on February 14, 2012 in the Village of Taos Ski Valley, New Mexico and on February 16, 2012 in the Town of Taos, New Mexico. Approximately 130 comment letters were received from various federal and state agencies, tribes, special interest groups, and individuals.

Comment letters were reviewed by an interdisciplinary team and comments were organized by topic. Relevant specialists prepared responses to these comments, which were compiled and included appendix C of the Final EIS and are also found in the project record as a stand-alone document. Responses to comments included changing or supplementing the EIS, providing clarification, or conducting additional analysis and literature reviews.

In addition, the proposal for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan—Phase 1 Projects has been listed on the forest's "Schedule of Proposed Actions" since January 2011. This document is updated and mailed or made available on the World Wide Web (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/land/carson/landmanagement>) every 3 months to those who are interested in activities proposed on the Carson NF.

Coordination with New Mexico Environment Department

During the Draft EIS comment period, the NMED submitted comments on the potential for increased runoff, erosion, and sedimentation resulting from implementation of any of the proposed projects and their effects to water quality. BMPs to reduce potential sediment loads

were identified in the Draft EIS. The BMPs identified in the Draft EIS are considered common management practices historically used by ski area managers in alpine and sub-alpine environments, to prevent or decrease potential resource impacts. They are highly effective methods that can be planned in advance and adapted to site conditions, as needed. However, they were not specifically incorporated into the watershed modeling used to predict the effects of the proposed projects; therefore, their effectiveness was not quantified.

The NMED's primary concern focused on the possibility that increased nitrogen and phosphorus loading to the Rio Hondo would rise above the TMDL established by the State, leading to an impaired listing for the Rio Hondo. In response to this concern, the Forest Service met with representatives from NMED, as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,⁸ at Taos Ski Valley on May 10, 2012, to review the proposed projects with the highest potential to deliver sediment to the Rio Hondo. Due to their proximity to the river, the reconfiguration of the parking lots and the Snowtubing Center were the subject of the field trip.

The NMED advised incorporating a new watershed model, called Spreadsheet Tool for Estimating Pollutant Load (STEPL), to quantitatively define the effectiveness of BMPs identified in the Draft EIS. The agency also suggested that additional BMPs that have been shown to effectively manage runoff, erosion, and sedimentation be incorporated into the Final EIS. The Water, Wetland, and Soils Resources section of the Final EIS has been updated with this information, to ensure the agency's concerns were well understood and addressed. Additional modeling established the effectiveness of BMPs, and the result shows nutrient loading is not anticipated to increase nitrogen and phosphorus above the limit in the TMDL from all of the proposed phase 1 projects combined.

Consultation with New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Executive Order (EO) 11593 require federal agencies to take into account the effect of a project on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for, inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Carson NF uses the agreed upon standards in the Region 3 First Amended Programmatic Agreement (PA) with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)⁹ to comply with the federal requirements of the NHPA. Additionally, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979 requires archaeological resources to be protected for future generations of Americans.

The Forest Service consulted with the SHPO to ensure compliance with the federal requirements of the NHPA, EO 11593 and the ARPA. The Phase 1 projects comply with the R3 First Amended Programmatic Agreement provisions of Sections I and II.

Tribal Consultation

On December 3, 2010, the Carson NF sent letters specific to the proposal for TSV's phase 1 projects to all of the tribes listed below. Three tribes (Taos Pueblo, The Navajo Nation, and The Comanche Nation) responded with letters. Neither The Navajo Nation or Comanche Nation had

⁸ The Army Corps of Engineers has the regulatory authority for various activities in the nation's waterways, including navigable waters, and wetlands.

⁹ The State Historic Preservation Officer is responsible for the operation and management of New Mexico's Historic Preservation Division and reviews the effects of modern development projects on New Mexico's archaeological, historic and traditional resources.

any concerns with the proposal. All tribes will also receive the Final EIS and this record of decision. The contacted tribes are as follows:

Pueblo of Taos	Bureau of Indian Affairs –
Pueblo of Picuris	Northern Pueblos Agency
Pueblo of Jemez	Jicarilla Apache Nation
Pueblo of Kewa	Comanche Tribe of
Pueblo of Nambe	Oklahoma
Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh	The Hopi Tribe
Pueblo of Pojoaque	The Navajo Nation
Pueblo of Santa Clara	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Pueblo of Tesuque	Ute Mountain Tribe
Pueblo of Zuni	White Mountain Apache
Eight Northern Pueblos	Tribe
Council	

Appropriate members of each tribe, including governors, chairpersons, culture program managers, and Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) specialists, are sent the Carson NF's quarterly schedule of proposed actions. The schedule has included the proposal for TSV's phase 1 projects since January 2011. The tribes are also contacted annually with a proposed project list.

During the NEPA process, Taos Pueblo officials expressed concern related to the proposed Main Street Lift and how it may encourage trespass on nearby Pueblo lands, primarily during the summer months. Kendall Clark, who was Carson NF Supervisor at the time, met and consulted with Taos Pueblo officials concerning the proposed action on March 10, 2011, July 22, 2011, and February 23, 2012. Although the forest supervisor assured officials the proposed lift would not operate during the summer, Taos Pueblo's concern was identified as a significant issue and carried forward in the analysis (refer to the next section). As discussed on page 76 of the Final EIS, under the selected alternative (alternative 2), neither the Main Street Lift nor the Ridge Lift would be operated during the summer and access above Lift 5, which is operated during the summer to mid-way up the front side of the mountain, would not change. The selected alternative would not increase the potential for hikers in the area to trespass on tribal lands.

In addition to the Forest Service consultation process, representatives from TSV met with Taos Pueblo officials to discuss current and future ski area operations and tribal concerns. As discussed on page 92 of the Final EIS, no concerns were raised with the proposed projects during meetings after the publication of the Draft EIS.

Significant Issues and How They Were Addressed

Using the comments from the public, other agencies, and tribes, the interdisciplinary team identified a list of issues to be addressed in the EIS. The Forest Service separated the issues into two groups: significant and non-significant issues. Significant issues were defined as those directly or indirectly caused by implementing the proposed action. Non-significant issues were

identified as those: (1) outside the scope of the proposed action; (2) already decided by law, regulation, forest plan, or other higher level decision; (3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; or (4) conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations explain this delineation in Sec. 1501.7, "...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec. 1506.3)..." A list of non-significant issues and reasons regarding their categorization as non-significant may be found in the project record. The Carson NF identified the following significant issues:

- The hike-to terrain on Kachina Peak and West Basin Ridge provides the adventure and solitude that helps define the TSV experience. As proposed, the Main Street and Ridge Lifts would change some of the existing hike-to only terrain within TSV's SUP area to both lift-served and hike-to skiing; thereby, increasing use of West Basin Ridge and Kachina Peak and altering the current experience. The proposed Main Street Lift's upper terminal may also be visible from the Wheeler Peak Wilderness and there is potential for the proposed Main Street Lift to induce skiers and hikers to trespass onto Taos Pueblo tribal lands.
- Proposed reconfigurations of the parking lot and East Guest Drop-Off Area may alter vehicular circulation and pedestrian access to the base area and local businesses.
- Construction and operation of the proposed Snowtubing Center and the parking lot reconfiguration have the potential to affect waters of the U.S., including wetlands, within the Rio Hondo watershed.

Alternatives Considered

In addition to the proposed action, nine alternatives were considered. None of the alternatives considered would have changed the boundary of TSV's 1,268-acre SUP area. Seven alternatives were considered and eliminated from detailed analysis. The Final EIS (pp. 30-32) provides the rationale for why the following alternatives were dropped from further study:

- An alternative that locates the snowtubing area near the snowshoeing trails.
- An alternative that aligns the snowtubing lanes to the west.
- An alternative mountain bike trail alignment.
- An alternative that keeps the existing footbridge alignment to Alpine Village.
- An alternative that includes additional parking.
- Alternative reconfigurations of the parking lots.
- An alternative that implements all the projects identified in the 2010 Master Development Plan.

A second action alternative (alternative 3) and the required no action alternative (alternative 1) were analyzed in detail in the Draft and Final EIS. Alternative 3 was developed in response to significant issues raised by the public during scoping (Final EIS, pp. 10-11).

Alternative 1 – No Action

The NEPA regulations require a no action alternative be included for analysis alongside the action alternatives.¹⁰ By definition, a no action alternative represents a continuation of existing management practices without changes, additions, or upgrades to the existing ski area infrastructure and trail system. As such, no new projects would have been implemented under the no action alternative. Brief descriptions of existing on-mountain facilities and services are provided in the Final EIS (pp. 15-16 and appendix A - maps 1 and 4).

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 was developed in response to issues raised by the public during scoping. Alternative 3 did not include the Main Street Lift or the Ridge Lift in order to address the following issues related to the proposed lifts:

- The proposed Main Street Lift and Ridge Lift would alter the current skier/rider experience of hiking from the top of Lift 2 to ski Main Street and Hunziker and the West Basin Ridge chutes.
- The top terminal of the proposed Main Street Lift may be visible from Wheeler Peak, the highest peak in the Wheeler Peak Wilderness and all of New Mexico.
- The proposed Main Street Lift could have the potential to encourage hikers to trespass onto Taos Pueblo lands.

In order to address the following issue related to resort access, alternative 3 did not include the East Guest Drop-Off Area:

- The proposed East Guest Drop-Off Area has potential to negatively affect local business owners that currently have shops located along the Sutton Place Road, where visitors can easily see and enter on their way to the base area from the parking lot.

In order to address the following issue related to the proposed Snowtubing Center and parking lot reconfiguration, alternative 3 did not include these components:

- Construction and operation of the proposed Snowtubing Center and the parking lot reconfiguration have the potential to negatively affect waters of the U.S., including wetlands, within the Rio Hondo watershed.

Glades

Alternative 3 included two new gladed areas – Wild West and the Minnesotas – as described in the decision and in the Final EIS (pp. 22-24 and appendix A - map 3).

Lift Replacements

As with alternative 2, alternative 3 included the replacement of Lifts 4, 5, and 7 as described in the Final EIS (pp. 23-24 and appendix A - map 3).

¹⁰ 40 CFR 1502.14(d)

Adventure Center (Snowshoeing)

As with alternative 2, alternative 3 included an Adventure Center that would provide a designated and marked interpretive trail system for snowshoeing, to further supplement winter activities offered at TSV. The Adventure Center is described in the Final EIS (pp. 24-25 and appendix A - map 4).

Mountain Bike Trail

As with alternative 2, a lift-served Mountain Bike Trail (approximately 3.6 miles) was included in alternative 3 between the top of Lift 1 and the base area. The Mountain Bike Trail is described in the Final EIS (pp. 24-25 and appendix A - map 3).

Environmentally Preferable Alternative
The CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1505.2(b)) require the ROD to identify the alternative(s) that could be considered environmentally preferable. The environmentally preferable alternative is defined by CEQ as: (1) the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and (2) the alternative that best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.

Alternative 1 is the environmentally preferable alternative, as it represents a continuation of existing management practices without changes, additions, or upgrades to the existing ski area infrastructure and trail system. No new projects would be implemented as a result of approval of alternative 1.

Findings Required By Other Laws

The analysis of Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan—Phase 1 Projects must comply and conform to a number of statutory requirements, including requirements of the following Acts:

National Forest Management Act

Every National Forest unit is required to develop a land and resource management plan (forest plan) by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976 (NFMA, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1600-1614 et seq.). The Carson forest plan was approved in 1986. Implementation is designed to provide for multiple use and sustained yield of goods and services from the National Forest System in a way that maximizes long-term net public benefits in an environmentally sound manner. The Carson forest plan guides all natural resource management activities, including the provision of developed recreational opportunities, and establishes resource management standards. Determining appropriate development of TSV through this analysis will help implement the Carson forest plan.

Carson Forest Plan

The 1986 Carson Forest Plan allocates the entire TSV permit area to Management Area (MA) 16 – Recreation Sites. Management Area 16 standards and guidelines under “Ski Areas” state:

- Administer the existing ski areas in accordance with the direction in the Master Development Plan for each area.
- Plan and monitor watershed treatments and conditions.
- Conduct administrative studies relating to watershed management.

In conjunction with each resource analysis presented in the Final EIS, a review of the Carson forest plan was also conducted in order to determine consistency with forestwide prescriptions and MA standards and guidelines. All of the alternatives were determined to be consistent with the Carson forest plan.

National Environmental Policy Act

This decision is in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.¹¹ The NEPA provisions have been followed as required under 40 CFR 1500. The Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan—Phase 1 Projects Final EIS and this ROD comply with the intent and requirements of NEPA. The Final EIS analyzes a range of reasonable alternatives, including a "no action" alternative. It also discloses the expected impacts of each alternative, and discusses the identified issues and concerns. This document describes the decisions I have made and the rationale for making the decisions.

Endangered Species Act

Forest Service Manual 2670 provides direction on the review, actions, and programs authorized, funded or implemented by the Forest Service relative to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.¹² Under ESA, the Forest Service is required to undergo Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for such a federal action when it may affect listed species. No impacts to any listed species were identified; therefore, Section 7 consultation was not required. Hence, this decision is consistent with ESA.

Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972¹³ regulates discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States and waters that do not comply with water quality standards. The CWA sets standards for water quality and pollution control. Under section 303(d) stream reaches that do not comply with standards are listed as impaired surface waters and states are required to identify TMDLs for pollutants in which the stream is not in compliance, to achieve load reductions. Streams within the project area that are listed as impaired and/or have a TMDL specified are discussed in the Water, Wetlands and Soils Resources Section of the Final EIS. With implementation of appropriate BMPs for existing operations, maintenance activities, and approved projects, as well as the consideration of cumulative inputs to the 2005 Rio Hondo TMDL, I am confident that current water quality will be maintained and this decision will meet the statutory requirements of the Clean Water Act.

National Historic Preservation Act

As described under the "Coordination with State Agencies" the Forest Service has consulted with the SHPO to ensure compliance with the federal requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Most of the phase 1 improvement projects comply with the R3 First Amended PA provisions of Appendix A, Section I, "Undertakings Subject to Standard Consultation." Standard consultation was completed. The remainder of the proposed projects complies with the R3 First Amended PA provisions of Appendix A, Section II, "Exemptions,"

¹¹ 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347

¹² 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.

¹³ 33 U.S.C. §1251 et seq.

where the Forest Service and the SHPO agree that these classes of undertakings have predictable effects and a very low likelihood of affecting historic properties.

Wilderness Act

The Wilderness Act of 1964¹⁴ provides Congress the power to designate areas of federally managed land as protected wilderness. Wilderness areas are places where human influence is “substantially unnoticeable,” and once designated, they are managed to retain their wild character, as well as to provide opportunities for solitude and recreation. Human activities within a designated wilderness area are limited to non-motorized, non-developed recreation, scientific research, and other non-invasive activities. While the selected alternative will not increase or encourage these prohibited activities in the wilderness area, a portion of the Main Street Lift’s top terminal will be visible from the ridge between Wheeler and Walter Peaks in the Wheeler Peak Wilderness and will contribute to the ski area development that can already be seen from this vantage point. The development within TSV’s permit area has been commonly viewed from Wheeler Peak Wilderness since 1964, when Wheeler Peak Wilderness was established; however, the top portion of the Main Street Lift terminal will not affect the wilderness characteristics of Wheeler Peak Wilderness or the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Study Area.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (NWSRA) of 1968 to preserve free-flowing rivers that possess certain “outstandingly remarkable” values.¹⁵ Pursuant to Section 5(d)(1) of the Act, the Secretary of Agriculture requires the Forest Service to evaluate rivers within its jurisdiction for their potential for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Evaluation of a river’s potential as a wild and scenic river consists of the following three-step process:

- 1) Determination of eligibility (inventory);
- 2) Potential classification – wild, scenic, or recreational (inventory); and
- 3) Determination of suitability (decision).

In 1998 the Carson National Forest evaluated rivers on the Questa RD pursuant to the Act. An eligibility and classification inventory was completed by an interdisciplinary team, including experts in wildlife, recreation, hydrology, and fisheries.¹⁶ Lake Fork Creek, a tributary of the Rio Hondo, lies along the east and north side of the TSV permit area and Rio Hondo lies on the north side. Neither Lake Fork Creek nor the Rio Hondo was determined to be eligible for potential inclusion in the National System under the NWSRA.¹⁷ The selected alternative will not have an effect on the wild and scenic rivers or a river’s eligibility. Hence, this decision is consistent with the NWSRA.

¹⁴ 16 U.S.C. 1131-1136, 78 Stat. 890

¹⁵ Public Law (P.L.) 90-542; U.S.C. §1271

¹⁶ USDA Forest Service, 1998

¹⁷ P. L. 90-542 16 U.S.C. 1271-1287

Administrative Review and Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) in accordance with 36 CFR 215. A written notice of appeal -- clearly stating it is a notice of appeal being filed pursuant to 36 CFR 215.14 -- must be filed within 45 days from the day after the date of publication of legal notice of this decision in *The Taos News*. The publication date in *The Taos News*, the newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Individuals or organizations who submitted comments during the Draft EIS comment period specified at 215.6 may appeal this decision. Interest expressed or comments provided on this project prior to or after the close of the comment period do not have standing for appeal purposes. The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 215.14. Names and addresses of appellants will become part of the public record.

The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 215.14. An appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer. Written appeals must be submitted to:

Deputy Regional Forester, Southwestern Region
Appeal Deciding Officer
333 Broadway Blvd., SE
Albuquerque, NM 87102
FAX: (505) 842-3173
E-mail: appeals-southwestern-regional-office@fs.fed.us

The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Adobe (.pdf), or Word (.doc or .docx) to: appeals-southwestern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. The appeal must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic appeals.

Implementation Date

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

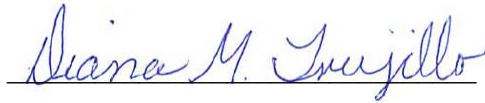
Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact:

Audrey Kuykendall, Planning and Minerals Staff Officer
Carson National Forest
208 Cruz Alta Road
Taos, NM 87571
(575) 758-6200

This record of decision and the associated Final EIS are available for inspection during regular business hours at the Forest Supervisor's Office at the address stated above. Electronic copies are available on the Carson National Forest's website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson/>. Go to Quick Links.

Signature and Date



DIANA M. TRUJILLO
Acting Forest Supervisor

August 23, 2012

Date

Project Record Index

Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects

PR No	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
001	4/1/1981	FEIS for Taos Ski Valley's Master Development Plan (MDP)	USDA Forest Service	
002	5/21/1981	ROD for Taos Ski Valley's MDP (superseded by the 2010 MDP)	USDA Forest Service	
003	9/30/1986	Environmental Impact Statement for Carson NF Land and Resource Management Plan (LMP)	USDA Forest Service	
004	10/31/1986	Record of Decision for Carson NF LMP	USDA Forest Service	
005	11/1/1986	Carson National Forest LMP, with amendments 1 through 15 (folder)	USDA Forest Service	
006	8/1/1987	Report: Terrestrial Ecosystems Survey of the Carson National Forest	USDA Forest Service	
007	1/1/1997	Considering Cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act	Council on Environmental Quality	
008	10/22/2004	Special Use Permit: Term permit authorizing Taos Ski Valley to operate a ski area on NFS lands for 40 years (expires in 2044)	USDA Forest Service	
009	12/3/2009	3D map: Providing perspective of TSV SUP boundary & Taos Pueblo boundary	SE Group	
010	4/9/2010	Letter: Forest Service acceptance of Taos Ski Valley's new Master Development Plan, which supersedes the 1981 MDP	USDA Forest Service - Forest Supervisor	Mickey Blake, Owner/Operator TSV Inc.
011	4/10/2010	Taos Ski Valley 2010 Master Development Plan	TSV	
012	6/30/2010	Letter: Proposing MDP phase 1 projects to be taken through NEPA process	Mickey Blake, Owner/Operator TSV Inc.	USDA Forest Service - Forest Supervisor
013	10/1/2010	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects, with public & tribal mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
014	10/29/2010	Meeting Notes: IDT Meeting with FS & SE Group to review tasks & responsibilities, components of proposed action, purpose & need, & schedule for Phase 1 proposal	SE Group	
015	11/16/2010	Disclosure statement: No conflict of interest	SE Group, Kent Sharp, Principal	
016	11/23/2010	Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS: Describes proposed actions and purpose and need (75 FR	<i>Federal Register</i>	

Project Record Index
Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects

PR No	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
		71414-15)		
017	12/3/2010	Scoping Letter and Maps: Describing proposed TSV MDP Phase 1 projects, with mailing list	USDA Forest Service - Forest Supervisor	Public, agency, & tribal mailing list
018	12/3/2010	Scoping Letter: Summarizing TSV MDP Phase 1 projects and where on the Web a detailed description is located, with mailing list	USDA Forest Service - Forest Supervisor	Public mailing list
019	12/3/2010	Letter: Tribal consultation for TSV's 2010 MDP Phase 1 Projects, with mailing list	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor	Tribal Mailing List
020	1/1/2011	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects, with public a& tribal mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
021	1/5/2011	Letter: Tribal response to 12/3/2010 letter. No current listings identified.	The Comanche Nation	USDA Forest Service – Project leader
022	1/14/2011	Letter: Agency response to 12/3/2010 scoping letter	NM Department of Game & Fish	USDA Forest Service - Forest Supervisor
023	1/14/2011	Letter: Agency response to 12/3/2010 scoping letter	Taos Soil & Water Conservation District	USDA Forest Service - Forest Supervisor
024	1/17/2011	Letter: Agency response to scoping	NM Environment Department	USDA Forest Service - Forest Supervisor
025	1/18/2011	Letter: Tribal response to scoping	Taos Pueblo	USDA Forest Service - Forest Supervisor
026	2/1/2011	Letters: 40 comment letters from members of the public in response to 12/3/2010 scoping letter (folder)	Public	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
027	2/21/2011	Document: Comment analysis from responses to scoping letter (12/3/2010), with e-mail transmittal. Pre-work for 3/1-2/2011 IDT meeting.	SE Group	

Project Record Index
Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects

PR No	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
028	2/24/2011	Media: "Concerns raised about Taos Ski Valley expansion"	<i>The Taos News</i>	
029	3/1/2011	Meeting Notes: On-site IDT meeting with FS, SE Group, & TSV to show IDT members the locations of Phase 1 Projects in snow.	SE Group	
030	3/2/2011	Meeting Notes: In-office IDT meeting to review comments from scoping to identify significant issues & develop alternative(s) to address the issues	SE Group	
031	3/10/2011	Tribal consultation: Notes with FS (Forest Supervisor, Forest Tribal liaison, & District Archeologist) & Taos Pueblo representatives	USDA Forest Service – Questa RD Archeologist	
032	3/28/2011	Letter: Tribal response to scoping. Navajo Nation has no concerns at this time.	The Navajo Nation	USDA Forest Service - Forest Supervisor
033	3/29/2011	Meeting Notes: TSV representatives meet with Taos Pueblo Officials regarding Phase 1 proposal	Gordon Briner, TSV, Inc.	USDA Forest Service – Zone Rec/Lands Staff Officer
034	4/1/2012	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects, with public & tribal mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
035	6/23/2011	FOIA Request and Response: Request for documents on TSV's MDP, Phase 1 project proposal & FS response letter (7/18/2011) (folder)	Ski Area Citizen's Coalition	Carson NF FOIA Coordinator
036	7/1/2011	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects, with public & tribal mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
037	7/22/2011	Tribal consultation: Notes with FS (Forest Supervisor, Forest Tribal liaison, & District Archeologist) & Taos Pueblo representatives	USDA Forest Service – Carson NF, Questa RD Archaeologist	
038	7/27/2011	Meeting Notes: On-site IDT meeting with FS, SE Group, & TSV to show IDT members where relocation of proposed tubing area & reconfiguration of parking lot.	SE Group	

Project Record Index
Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects

PR No	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
039	7/28/2011	Meeting Notes: In-office IDT meeting with FS & SE Group to review modified proposed action, issues, & alternatives.	SE Group	
040	8/11/2011	Letter: Request to modify Phase 1 proposed action to relocate snow tubing area	TSV, Inc. Gordon Briner	USDA Forest Service – Project Leader
041	9/6/2011	Letter: Acceptance to modify Phase 1 proposed action to relocate snow tubing area	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor	TSV, Inc. Gordon Briner
042	9/6/2011	Conversation Record: Documentation meeting with John Cottam re relocating existing footbridge if East Drop-Off Area in Phase 1 Projects is approved.		
043	9/29/2011	Corrected Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS: Announces modification of the proposed action to move snow tubing area (76 FR 60451)	<i>Federal Register</i>	
044	10/1/2011	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects, with public & tribal mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
045	11/6/2011	Document: Summarization of significant issues identified, indicators, & alternatives	SE Group	
046	11/30/2011	Effects Report, references & supporting documentation: Cultural Resources (Carrie Leven, FS Archaeologist) (folder)	USDA Forest Service – District Archaeologist	
047	1/1/2012	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects, with public & tribal mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
048	1/13/2012	Draft Environmental Impact Statement for TSV's 2010 MDP Phase Projects, with cover letters & mailing list (folder)	USDA Forest Service	
049	1/13/2012	Notice of Availability: Draft EIS for TSV's 2010 MDP Phase 1 Projects available for 45-day public comment period (77 FR 2060), ending 2/27/2012	<i>Federal Register</i>	
050	1/19/2012	Legal Notice of Availability: Draft EIS for TSV's 2010 MDP Phase 1 Projects available for 45-day public comment period ending 2/27/12	<i>The Taos News</i>	

Project Record Index
Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects

PR No	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
051	1/20/2012	Documentation of correction of fax number in DEIS from project website	SE Group	
052	1/24/2012	Letter: Tribal response to Draft EIS for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects – No comments	Comanche Nation	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
053	2/2/2012	Media: “Taos Ski Valley seeks public input”	<i>Santa Fe New Mexican</i>	
054	2/6/2012	Media: “Forest seeking comments on Taos Ski Valley changes”	KKOB Eyewitness News	
055	2/7/2012	Media: “Comment sought on ski plan”	<i>Albuquerque Journal</i>	
056	2/9/2012	Media: “Forest Service accepting comments on TSV plan”	<i>The Taos News</i>	
057	2/13/2012	Letter: Agency response to Draft EIS for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects	NM Tourism Department	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
058	2/15/2012	Letter: Agency response to Draft EIS for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects – No comments	USDI – Regional Environmental Officer	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
059	2/16/2012	Media: My Turn, “Keeping backcountry areas intact is so needed”	<i>The Taos News</i>	
060	2/16/2012	Media: Featured Anuncios, “Taos master plan open house” dates, place, time	<i>The Taos News</i>	
061	2/14 & 16/2012	Open houses: Sign-in sheets & display maps for open houses held in Katie's (2/14/2012) & Rio Grande Hall, Taos, NM (2/26/2012) (folder)	USDA Forest Service - Project Leader	Record
062	2/23/2012	Media: “Feb. 27 deadline to comment on impact of Ski Valley plan for long-term development”	<i>The Taos News</i>	
063	2/23/2012	Media: Editorial, “A Sound Proposal”	<i>Santa Fe New Mexican</i>	
064	2/23/2012	Tribal consultation: Notes with FS (Forest Supervisor, Forest Tribal liaison, & District Archeologist) & Taos Pueblo representatives	USDA Forest Service – Carson NF,	

Project Record Index
Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects

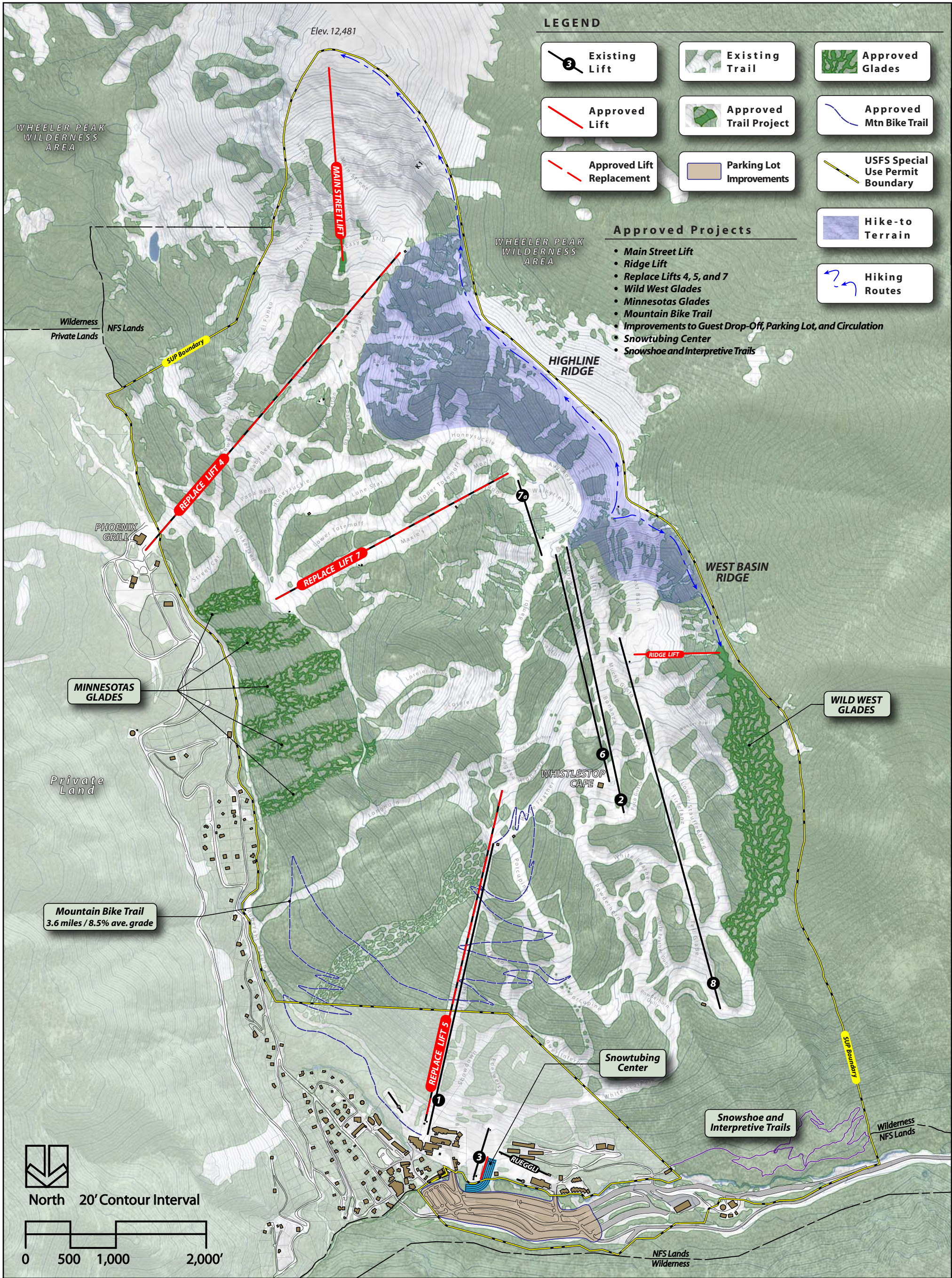
PR No	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
			Questa RD Archaeologist	
065	2/24/2012	Media: "Deadline nears for comments on Taos Ski Valley plan"	<i>Santa Fe New Mexican</i>	
066	2/24/2012	Media: Editorial, "Taos Ski Valley needs to grow"		
067	2/27/2012	Letter: Agency response to Draft EIS for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects - EPA has "not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantial changes to the proposal, and the DEIS adequately sets forth the environmental impacts of the alternatives."	Environmental Protection Agency – Office of Planning & Coordination	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
068	2/27/2012	Comment letters: 121 comment letters on the Draft EIS for TSV's 2010 MDP Phase 1 Projects received within 45-day comment period (folder also includes subfolder of comment letters received outside comment period)	Public	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
069	2/28/2012	Letter: Agency response to Draft EIS for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects	NM Environment Department – SWQB	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
070	2/29/2012	Letter: Agency response to Draft EIS for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects	NM Environment Department – Env Impact Review Coord	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
071	3/5/2012	Letter: Agency response to Draft EIS for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects	NM Department of Game & Fish	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
072	3/8/2012	Media: My Turn, "Questions for Carson National Forest Leadership"	<i>The Taos News</i>	
073	3/13/2012	Notes: Notes re The Taos News report who reviewed comment letters for news article	USDA Forest Service – Carson FOIA liaison	
074	3/15/2012	Media: "Hundred-plus comments sent on Ski Valley impact statement"	<i>The Taos News</i>	
075	4/1/2012	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects, with public & tribal mailing	USDA Forest Service	

Project Record Index
Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects

PR No	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
		lists		
076	4/10/2012	Memorandum of Understanding: Between Taos Pueblo and USDA Forest Service	Taos Pueblo, Governor & USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor	
077	5/10/2012	Field Trip Notes: Meeting with FS, FS/NMED liaison, & representatives from TSV, NMED, & Army Corps of Engineers	USDA Forest Service – Forest Soil Scientist	
078	6/1/2012	Letter: From Dr. Wolfe regarding white-tailed ptarmigan in the Wheeler Peak Wilderness & Kachina Peak areas & response from wildlife biologist, Ben Kuykendall (folder)	Wildlife Biologist, Ben Kuykendall	
079	6/11/2012	Media: My Turn, “Clean water top priority for TSV”	<i>The Taos News</i>	
080	6/14/2012	Inventory Standards & Accounting Report (Archeological Clearance): No effect. Surveys & maps of the analysis area that identify sites are not available for public review & not in the project record	USDA Forest Service, Forest Supervisor	
081	6/20/2012	Corrected Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS: Announces change in responsible official & revised dates (77 FR 36994-36995)	<i>Federal Register</i>	
082	6/26/2012	Biological Assessment (BA) (Federally Listed Species) for TSV's 2010 MDP Phase 1 Projects EIS, including documentation of MSO surveys. Literature references are located with Wildlife Effects Report (folder)	Wildlife Biologist, Ben Kuykendall	
083	6/26/2012	Biological Evaluation (BE) (R3 Forest Service Sensitive Species) for TSV's 2010 MDP Phase 1 Projects EIS, including documentation of sensitive species surveys. Literature references are located in Wildlife Effects Report folder (folder)	Wildlife Biologist, Ben Kuykendall	
084	6/26/2012	Vegetation & Wildlife Resources Effects Report for TSV's 2010 MDP Phase 1 Projects EIS, including 2011 Forest-wide MIS Assessment & all literature cited in BA & BE (folder)	Wildlife Biologist, Ben Kuykendall	
085	7/24/2012	References & supporting documentation: Social & Economic Environment (M. Sherburne, A. Pollak-Bruce) (folder)	SE Group	

Project Record Index
Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects

PR No	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
086	7/24/2012	References & supporting documentation: Recreation effects (K. Owens, J. Marks) (folder)	SE Group	
087	7/24/2012	References & supporting documentation: Visual Quality (J. Marks) (folder)	SE Group	
088	7/24/2012	References & supporting documentation: Specially Designated Areas (J. Marks) (folder)	SE Group	
089	7/31/2012	Letter: Village of Taos Ski Valley wastewater treatment plant update & Snow Removal Plan	Mark Fratrack, VTSV Village Administrator	USDA Forest Service – Forest Supervisor
090	8/2/2012	References & supporting documentation: Water, Wetlands, & Soils Resources (K. Owens, G. Miller Forest Soil Scientist) (folder)	USDA Forest Service – Forest Soils Scientist & Hydrologist & SE Group	
091	8/21/2012	References & supporting documentation: Climate Change and Air Quality (C. Ward) (folder)	SE Group	
092	8/20/2012	TSV Parking Area Snow Removal Plan	SE Group	
093	8/21/2012	Response to comments received during 45-day comment period for Taos Ski Valley's 2010 Master Development Plan Phase 1 Projects (1/13 thru 2/27/2012). Comments include references to Questa RD in cited letters.	USDA Forest Service & SE Group specialists	
094	8/23/2012	Final Environmental Impact Statement for TSV's 2010 MDP Phase Projects	USDA Forest Service - Carson NF	



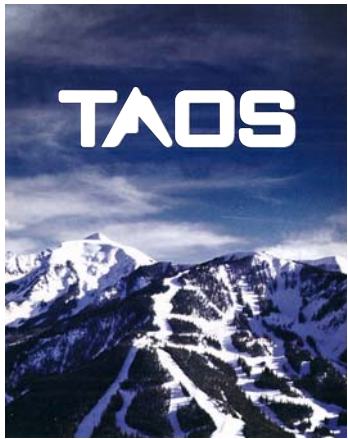
Prepared By:

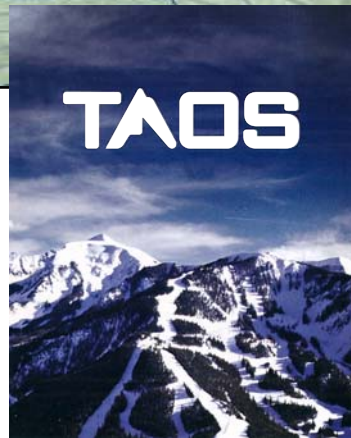
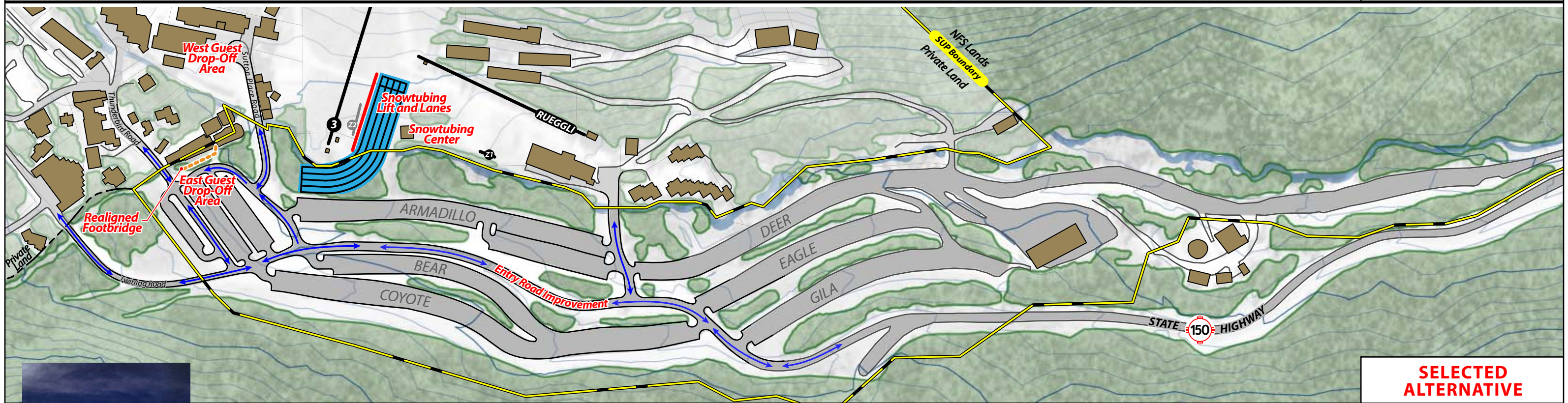
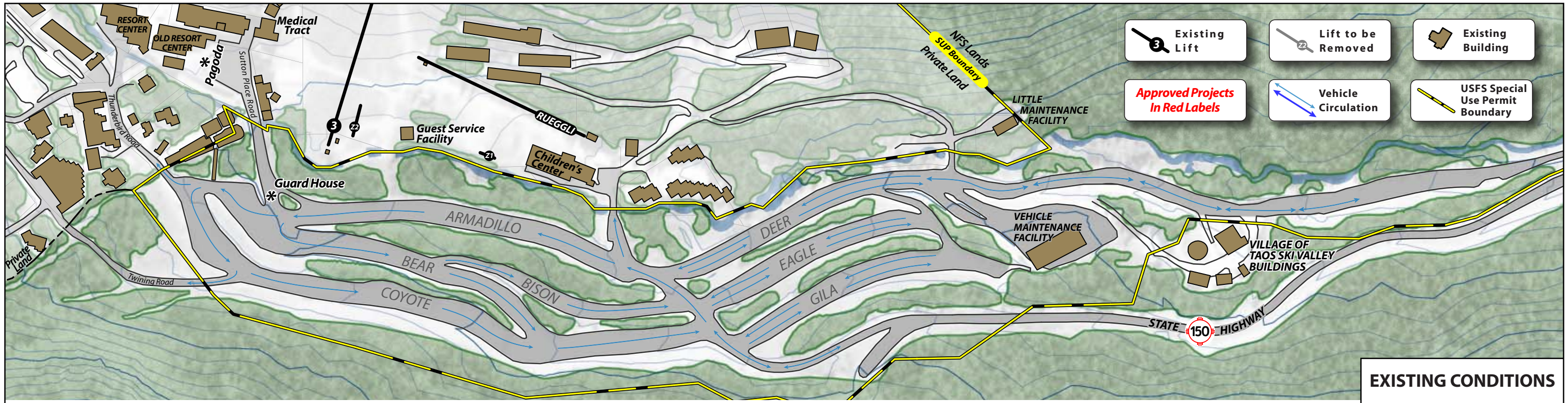


USDA Forest Service
Carson National Forest
Questa Ranger District

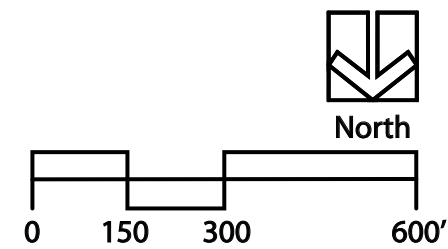


SELECTED ALTERNATIVE
TAOS SKI VALLEY EIS
MAP 1





BASE AREA DETAIL SELECTED ALTERNATIVE TAOS SKI VALLEY EIS MAP 2



Prepared By:



USDA Forest Service
Carson National Forest
Questa Ranger District



SE GROUP®