

Save Our Canyons

Citizens' Committee
to Save Our Canyons
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Dedicated to Protecting the Beauty and Wildness of the Wasatch Canyons, Mountains and Foothills

March 5, 2010

Dear Cache County Planning Commissioners,

I write to you today on behalf of the Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons, a Northern Utah based non-profit dedicated to protecting the wildness and beauty of the Wasatch mountains, canyons and foothills. Since our inception in 1972 we have grown to a membership base of 2000 individuals, and as of the past decade have a membership base beginning to take form in the Cache Valley. That said, we have had a number of concerns expressed to us by people in the Cache Valley regarding the Rainey Ranch's proposal to develop a ski resort up Cherry Creek Canyon, near Richmond, Utah.

As proposed, approval of this conditional use, would degrade the environment and impact sensitive parcels of land managed by the State of Utah for Wildlife Conservation purposes and the US Forest Service. This project will alter the landscape and nature of Cherry Creek Canyon. Ski runs, by design, remove vegetation which stabilizes slopes and leads to the increase of erosion of the slopes. Roads would need to be improved, but also, open year round across the DWR property and automobile traffic along the drainage will displace the wildlife coming down from the Wilderness to find forage in the winter months. Increasing the number of people in this area could displace wildlife as well.

Ski areas while sometimes attractive for economic reasons, also come with economic responsibility which generally are passed on to the residents of the county and adjacent municipalities. Year round maintenance on 11000 North would need to be provided which is generally a cost assumed by the tax payers. Again, the year round maintenance and improvements to this road needs to be looked at by the DWR to analyze the impacts to wintering wildlife. Road bases also increase the transfer of pollutants into adjacent stream beds and have serious impacts to water quality and the natural functionality of riparian areas. Law enforcement along the corridor will also need to be provided for to ensure safe travel during hazardous driving conditions. Who will pay for the costs associated with providing access and services to this area?

It seems that the proposed request is inconsistent with the lay of the land and the FR40 zone. We would ask that the conditional use not be granted, until all issues concerning the environment, wildlife, adjacent sensitive lands, access, roadway costs, and public safety be resolved amongst the community and other interested parties.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and we look forward to working with you on this project to ensure that the amazing lands of the Wasatch Mountains are protected.

Sincerely,

Carl Fisher
Executive Director
Save Our Canyons