



Bear River Watershed Council

Leaders in Conservation Issues for the Bear River Basin

March 10, 2010

Cache County Planning and Zoning Commission
179 North Main St.
Logan, Utah 84321

Re: Rainey Ranch Ski Resort request for Special Use Permit

Dear Commission,

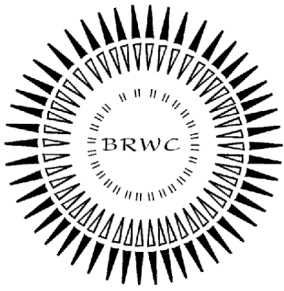
We have reviewed the proposal for Rainey Ranch Ski Resort and understand some of the potential impacts that could incur to the immediate environment including the economic and social impacts of the small community of Richmond.

The land in question is pinched between a Forest Service wilderness area and the Division of Wildlife Resources winter wildlife habitat. We believe the site has a unique character and is an important resource for wildlife. Because of this character, we believe the standards and criteria for a Special Use Permit hasn't been met and the permit should be denied.

However if the process continues, we hereby and respectfully request the planning office of Cache County insist that the developer perform the following studies and prepare plans to mitigate any and all impacts revealed in those studies.

- Slope stabilization study and mitigation plan.
- Noxious weed survey and mitigation plan.
- Ground and surface water geo-technical study.
- Develop a wild fire prevention, evacuation and suppression plan consistent with current standards.
- Wildlife impact study and mitigation plans that include how to eliminate skier trespass on DWR property.
- The wilderness boundary needs to be surveyed and a permit granted from the Forest Service to allow skiers access beyond the boundary. If no permit is granted a plan for controlling access needs to be in place.
- Sage grouse survey to determine if there is a presence and if there is viable habitat.

Sage grouse were just upgraded March 5, 2010 by the Federal Government as a "candidate" species under the Endangered Species Act. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said that this gives an opportunity "for public and private land users to take action, making sure the grouse doesn't have to be put on the endangered species list." With this in mind the developer should implement an on-the-ground survey including adjacent public lands.



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We would also insist that the County require the developers to post the necessary surety bonds with the County to assure that, in the event this project fails, the county and taxpayers are not held financially liable for any and all necessary restoration work.

Respectfully,

Dan Miller, Executive Director

[Bear River Watershed Council](#)

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