



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest  
Logan Ranger District

1500 East, Highway 89  
Logan, UT 84321-4373  
435-755-3620

File Code: 1500/2320

Date:

J. Clair Ellis  
Chairman  
Cache County Planning and Zoning  
179 North Main Street  
Logan, UT 84319

RECEIVED  
NOV 28 2011  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Chairman Ellis

I am writing to provide comment on the proposal for a Conditional Use Permit request for the Cherry Peak Ski Area development south of Richmond, Utah. This area is bounded on the north, south, and east by National Forest System lands.

Our primary concern is how the boundary will be managed. While the developed ski runs and chair lift previously proposed on National Forest System lands were removed, the existing ski lift delivers people to a ridge from which skiers can readily access the Mount Naomi Wilderness. Wilderness areas are managed for a number of objectives. Of most concern with this proposal are the ability to manage the area to preserve the natural conditions and provide opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation. The current proposal mentions suitable north facing slopes for skiing. Our review shows that most of the north facing slopes are in the Mount Naomi Wilderness area. If approved, the proponent should provide a suitable boundary survey with appropriate markers on the boundary and within the ski area.

Direct impacts to the Wilderness character can come from improved access for motorized and mechanized equipment adjacent to and potentially into the Wilderness. Skiers choosing to ski outside of the resort boundaries will not be seeking a primitive experience or seeking solitude, but will be part of a commercial enterprise using adjacent slopes. Unless specifically authorized in the legislation, there are no new commercial activities permitted in Wilderness areas. Given the layout of the ski lifts, the boundary between the resort and Wilderness will be indistinguishable. Some of the best ski terrain, directly downhill from the lifts on a large open ridge, leads into the Mount Naomi Wilderness. This terrain will be beyond the control of the resort, but may lead to avalanche prone areas and other unmarked hazards. Prior to approval, the proponent should determine how out-of-bounds skiing will be addressed, how they will communicate that message to visitors, and how they will enforce boundary issues.

While the resort in itself will change the character of the adjacent area, night lighting and noise from the mechanics of the development and machinery to support the grooming and upkeep of the resort will impact opportunities for solitude in this part of the Wilderness compared to what is existing now. These factors may also have a negative effect on wintering wildlife, as this area has been designated critical winter range for mule deer. Winter range is a limiting factor for deer and elk herd survival in this area.

The proposal also mentioned potential summer uses. Lift served mountain biking and hang gliding are popular activities at some resorts. Again given the placement of the ski lifts, if these activities are provided they would be in conflict with Wilderness regulations if they were to



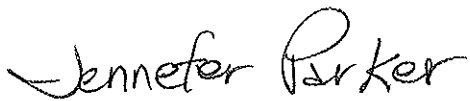
occur in the Wilderness area. Potential uses other than skiing, which are alluded to in the proposal, should be identified and analyzed. One of the biggest concerns is how the proponent will control motorized and mechanized access to the top of the lifts and potentially into the Wilderness area.

The resort development may also lead to an increase in use of this area of Wilderness. Currently this area is very lightly used, providing good opportunities for solitude. This is largely due to the poor condition of the road and lack of parking near the trailhead. The improved road, increased parking, improvements to a trailhead, and resort generated business could substantially increase visitor use. Some may come to visit the Wilderness for the character it provides, others will find it a short convenient hike (or bike ride) while enjoying other resort amenities. This can change both the type and amount of use into this area.

These concerns, generated by the development, will likely require an increased Forest Service management presence to retain the Wilderness character for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any further questions feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Parker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JENNEFER PARKER  
District Ranger

cc: M. Lynn Lemon