WILD UTAH PROJECT

Chris Harrild Cache County Planning and Zoning
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Logan, UT 84321
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Dear Mr. Harrild,

Please accept these comments concerning the proposed Cherry Creek Ski Area.

Wild Utah Project is a nonprofit organization that helps our conservation partners with scientific analysis including watershed analysis and protection.

Our work in this region has identified the mountain range east of Logan as regional connection for wildlife of continental importance. Establishing a new multi-seasonal industrial use area in Cherry Creek will negatively impact important winter and summer range for wildlife in this area.

We conducted GIS analysis of the site using recent aerial images. When we compared 2009 images with 2010, we observed that a new road had been created on site since 2009 along the steep ridge. The lower end of this new route starts at 6,305 ft. elevation and travels up the ridge for roughly one thousand feet. The average slope for this route is 28% and at one point reaches 38%.

The attached image displays this new route. The yellow line on the image shows the National Forest and wilderness boundary just up the hill from the top of this route.

The grade of this route exceeds good engineering practices. Routes normally should not exceed 15% in order to prevent excessive erosion.

This proposed ski area is at an elevation much lower than other ski areas in Utah. The top of the lifts for Cherry Creek would end approximately at 6,700 ft. Most ski areas occupy north and east facing slopes which have better snow conditions than the orientation of slopes at Cherry Creek.

It is likely that the season for this proposed ski area will be much shorter with significantly less snow than other Utah ski areas. Power Mountain ski area highest lift reached 9,422 and begins at 6,922 ft elevation. Alta highest lift reaches 10,550 ft elevation with lifts beginning at 8,350 ft elevation. Park City's ski areas extend from 6,900 to 10,000 ft elevation.

The ski industry is very concerned about the affects of climate change on their industry. A study conducted by Professor Mark Williams with the University of Colorado in 2008 modeled changes expected due to climate change for one resort in Utah, Park City, and other ski areas in other states. He forecast a temperature increases of 10.4 degrees for Park City by 2100. In the future, ski seasons are predicted to be shorter and ski areas will rely more in snow making in the future. Increase in man-made snow will require the diversion and storage of large amounts of water.

Under the scenario that most matches current emissions, Park City is predicted to have no snowpack at its base by 2100 and winter precipitation will mostly come in the form of rain.

I suggest that the Cherry Creek ski area proposal is not well researched and, based on past activities on the ground, the performance of this operation is likely to continue to produce unwanted results.

Thank you for this opportunity.
Jim Catlin, PhD

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