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August 17, 2001

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Ms. Kim Titus  
District Ranger  
Hood River Ranger District  
6780 Highway 35  
Mt. Hood/Parkdale, OR 97041

**Re: Comments on Environmental Assessment for the Construction of Lift 21 at the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area**

Dear Ms. Titus:

These are comments on the Environmental Assessment for the Construction of Lift 21 at the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area (the "EA"). I have been authorized to submit these comments on behalf of the following groups: Friends of Mt. Hood, the Hood River Valley Residents Committee, the Northwest Environmental Defense Center, the Central Cascades Alliance and the Oregon Natural Resources Council. The members of these organizations regularly use the Mt. Hood National Forest and other public lands for a variety of purposes and have a strong interest in improving and protecting forest ecosystems. Furthermore, members of these groups (myself included) regularly use the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area and have a unique perspective on implementation of the proposed projects. The proposed project directly threatens these interests.

If the United States Forest Service issues a Finding of No Significant Impact based upon the EA and approves the project, it will be in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA"), 42 U.S.C. § 4332, the National Forest Management Act ("NFMA"), 16 U.S.C. § 1600, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act ("CWA"), 33 U.S.C. § 1251, the Administrative Procedure Act ("APA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552, the Northwest Forest Plan and the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. We recommend the No Action alternative, and assert that NEPA requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

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In addition to this letter, please refer to our Administrative Appeal of the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan/Access Road EIS (December 1996) (the "Master Plan") as well as all the documents, maps, photos and declarations submitted in support of that appeal. We incorporate that entire appeal and all the supporting documentation by reference. The Forest Service has at least one copy of these documents on record, and we would be happy to provide another copy upon request, at USFS expense.

**A. The Forest Service has failed to analyze the site-specific cumulative impacts of other proposed projects included in the 1997 Master Plan.**

The EA fails to provide a site-specific cumulative impacts analysis of Lift 21 in conjunction with "reasonably foreseeable" future development within the Mt. Hood Meadows Permit Area (the "Permit Area"). The Master Plan also fails to adequately analyze the site-specific cumulative impacts of proposed expansion plans within the Permit Area. As a result, the Forest Service, the public and Mt. Hood Meadows ("Meadows") have horribly inadequate information on the site-specific cumulative impacts of the proposed expansions, yet the Forest Service has decided to proceed with the Lift 21 project in the absence of this information. As a result the project is in direct violation of NEPA.

The Forest Service states that it does not have to analyze the site-specific cumulative impacts of other projects set forth in the Master Plan, because they are not "reasonably foreseeable" pursuant to 40 CFR § 1508.7. According to the Forest Service, the projects set forth in the Master Plan are not reasonably foreseeable, because Meadows has not yet submitted a site-specific proposal for their actual implementation.

This argument is legally and logically irrational. It also contradicts the language and purpose of NEPA and results in a backwards and illogical planning process. The regulations clearly state that "significance cannot be avoided by \* \* \* breaking [a project] down into small component parts." 40 CFR § 1508.27(b)(7). In this case, Meadows has clearly stated its plan to significantly expand the number of lifts, on-mountain facilities, parking lot acreage, daily maximum capacity, and summer operations. Meadows has submitted the Master Plan to the Forest Service and made the expansion plans part of the public record and a part of the documentation accompanying its Special Use Permit. Nonetheless, the Forest Service claims that further expansion of Meadows is not "reasonably foreseeable" simply because Meadows will phase in the expansion over a number of years instead of in a single project. The Forest Service is avoiding a site-specific cumulative impacts analysis by breaking down the expansion plans that are contained in the Master Plan into conveniently smaller component parts.

When will the Forest Service determine whether the complete expansion plans have a significant cumulative impact on the fragile ecosystems of Mt. Hood? Will the

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Forest Service analyze the site-specific cumulative impacts on a piece-by-piece basis, including only past projects in the site-specific cumulative impacts analysis? That methodology only provides a perverse incentive for Meadows to space out their development to avoid the proper environmental review before the beginning of a project. That approach also results in a horrible planning process in which the public and the Forest Service will only identify cumulative impacts after they have taken place. This clearly violates the purpose of NEPA and the site-specific cumulative impacts analysis requirements.

Before the Forest Service can issue a Finding of No Significant Impact, the EA must include an analysis of the site-specific cumulative impacts of Lift 21 in conjunction with all other projects set forth in the Master Plan. Without such an analysis, the Forest Service will have violated NEPA, and the public will not have received adequate information on the environmental impacts of Meadow's proposed expansion plans.

### **B. Mt. Hood Meadows does not need Lift 21.**

The EA states that Meadows needs Lift 21, because (1) there are crowded conditions in the Buttercup/Red areas and (2) Meadows needs to provide access to high-altitude terrain for novice and beginner riders. The facts and analysis in the EA simply do not support these conclusions.

Although the EA has included information on an increase in the number of novice skiers, this information alone does not support a need for another lift. First, how was the increase in beginning and novice snow riders calculated? Recent data has shown that Meadows has not experienced a long-term increase in skier days per year but that this figure fluctuates around a steady mean depending upon yearly snowfall. The Forest Service must substantiate the claimed increase in novice and beginner skiers. Furthermore, how long are the lift lines at the Red and Buttercup areas on an average day? How many accidents can be attributed to over-crowding on beginning terrain? And more importantly, how much additional beginner terrain will Lift 21 open up?

The need analysis is fundamentally flawed. Meadows and the Forest Service cannot simply point to an increase in skier days and then conclude that Meadows needs to expand. Some information is needed on the current capacity of the beginner area surrounding Red and Buttercup and the proposed increase in capacity. From my personal experience at Meadows, Red and Buttercup are rarely crowded (more than a 5 minute lift line) except on the busiest of weekends. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, according to Meadows' trail map, Lift 21 will provide access to a single green run (Vista Ridge). In fact, a great majority of the terrain accessed by the proposed Lift 21 is intermediate or advanced terrain, and all of this terrain is already accessible from one of the other lifts.

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Furthermore, the top station of Lift 21 will be placed in one of the windiest parts of the Permit Area. Cascade already suffers from frequent weather closures, and Lift 21 will experience similar conditions, because it is situated along the top of the ridge and exposed to the wind.

Meadows simply does not need Lift 21. The EA fails to demonstrate a need for increased uphill capacity in this part of the Permit Area, all of the terrain associated with Lift 21 is already accessible from other lifts, and Lift 21 will likely sit idle on many days because of the weather.

### **C. The EA fails to analyze other viable alternatives.**

The EA only studied two alternatives: the no action alternative and the proposed action alternative. An over-snow, no road alternative was eliminated from further study.

The Forest Service, however, did not consider relocating the lift to avoid placement of towers in riparian reserves, to avoid removal of trees in the krummholz ecosystem or to avoid construction of a new road. The Forest Service should consider another location or an altered design that avoids these impacts. Why has it failed to do so? In short, the Forest Service has not considered an acceptable range of alternatives.

Furthermore, Judge King recently ruled that the Forest Service failed to properly analyze parking alternatives in the Master Plan EIS. In consideration of Judge King's ruling, we would think that the Forest Service would make a better effort to discuss other locations as opposed to simply alternative construction methods.

### **D. The EA fails to adequately analyze the environmental affects of soil spreading.**

The EA states that the construction activities will require the excavation of 8,200 cubic yards of material, which will be "spread around and seeded." EA at pg. 6. Excavated soil from the two towers in riparian reserves will allegedly be "placed as restoration fill on the temporary road above just above Daisy." EA at pg. 12. The EA has failed to adequately analyze the environmental impacts from these soil-spreading activities and has failed to provide the public with adequate information to assess the impacts of these activities.

8,200 cubic yards is a significant amount of material. The Forest Service admits that the bottom lift terminal is situated near wetlands, habitat for *Calamagrotis brewewii*, Mitchell Creek and sensitive riparian areas. Exactly where in this sensitive ecosystem will the 5000 cubic yards of material from the bottom lift station be located? Why is erosion the only potential impact that has been analyzed? Has the Forest Service determined how effective revegetation and erosion control measures have been in other

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parts of the Permit Area? Is it not true that the effectiveness of the control measures depend on the location of the placement? Evidence suggests that recent revegetation efforts have failed to prevent erosion and mitigate impacts to vegetative communities. The attached photo (Photo A) documents revegetation problems at the bottom of Shooting Star. Why will the revegetation efforts be any more successful with this project?

The EA also fails to adequately analyze environmental impacts of excavating soil from the tower locations in the riparian reserves. How much soil will be taken from the sites? What are the environmental impacts of the mitigation measures? How much soil will be placed on the temporary road above Daisy?

I recently visited the site, and the “temporary road” does not look very temporary. Please refer to the attached photos (Photos B and C) documenting the recent condition of the “temporary road.” The road surface has been severely cut out from the surrounding grade, and it appears as if revegetation efforts have failed to stabilize the soils on the steepest part of the road. What data supports the conclusion that placing the soil in the temporary road will not result in increased erosion, channelization, peak flow and sedimentation? Judging from the current condition of the “temporary road” what is the mass volume of soil that has been lost due to erosion? The public is completely unable to analyze these issues without any data addressing the questions raised above.

Spreading 8,200 cubic yards of material in a high-alpine ecosystem containing wetlands, riparian areas, clear cuts, roads, steep grades and sensitive hydrology is a serious undertaking. The EA provides absolutely no data supporting the conclusion that this process can be completed without imposing a significant impact on the environment.

### **E. The EA has failed to adequately analyze compliance with the ACS.**

The Forest Service has allegedly determined that the Lift 21 project is consistent with objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy by analyzing “the effects this project has on those indicators at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> field watershed scale.” EA at pg. 21. The Forest Service, in focusing on a watershed scale analysis, effectively ignores significant site-specific impacts. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals clearly stated that the analysis must include a determination of whether the project will meet ACS objectives at the site-specific scale. Pac. Coast Fed. Of Fishermens Ass’ns v. National Marine Fisheries Service, 253 F3d 1137 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir 2001).

In this case, the construction of Lift 21 may not meet ACS objectives when analyzed at a site-specific scale. The EA admits that there will be a moderate risk of sedimentation accompanying excavation at the upper terminal. EA at pg. 19. Furthermore, construction and reconstruction of the road will increase the drainage network and peak flows, degrading the quality of watershed interconnectivity. Placement

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of the two towers within the riparian reserve of the South Canyon tributary will also degrade the physical integrity of the aquatic systems. Excavation and spreading of 8,200 cubic yards of material will further degrade water quality and sediment regimes while also degrading the physical integrity of the aquatic system.

“Appropriate analysis of ACS compliance is undertaken at both the watershed and project levels.” 253 F3d at 1141. The Forest Service has failed to analyze ACS compliance at the project level.

### **F. Implementation of the Lift 21 project would violate NFMA and the Mt. Hood National Forest Plan.**

All projects implemented in the Permit Area must comply with the MHNF Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines. In this case, the Lift 21 project would likely violate those standards.

#### **1. FW-060 – Management practices causing detrimental changes in water temperature or chemical composition, blockages of water courses, or deposits of sediments shall not be permitted.**

Despite the statement made in the EA, the Lift 21 project will potentially result in detrimental deposits of sediment into stream channels and riparian areas. The EA admits that more than 2,000 cubic yards of material will be excavated from the top terminal near an ephemeral stream channel. The EA also proposes placing impermeable material in a riparian reserve at the location of two separate lift towers. Furthermore, over 5,000 cubic yards of material from the bottom terminal will be spread in an area near sensitive wetlands, riparian reserves and habitat for the *Calamagrotis brewewii*.

Finally, the EA also proposed placing tons of excavated material on a temporary road that has failed to recover from previous use and which has clearly suffered from significant erosion problems. The EA concludes that “[t]he obliterated road (to access Cascade Lift) was barely visible.” EA at pg. 10. In fact, the bottom third of this road is quite visible and still suffers from severe erosion problems. This old road was supposed to have been “obliterated” to avoid these problems but still persists to this day and still contributes to sedimentation problems within the South Canyon 6<sup>th</sup> Field Watershed.

The EA lacks any data and merely relies on the basic assumptions that the project will prevent erosion and deposit of sediment in watercourses. The description of the project, the history of past environmental damage within the permit area and a visual review of the project site all indicate that the proposed construction will result in erosion and sedimentation.

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The EA concludes that the amount of sediment deposited in the streams will not be detrimental because there will be no impact to fish habitat. EA at pg. 14. This conclusion, however, completely fails to acknowledge the interconnectivity of hydrological systems and assumes that any individual location has positive ecological value only if it provides habitat for fish. The Forest Service cannot properly conclude that sediment deposition in a high-altitude ephemeral stream is not detrimental simply because no fish live at that high of an altitude. The Forest Service must take into account other ecological values in determining whether the sediment deposition that will admittedly take place will violate FW-060.

**2. FW-078 - Major groundwater recharge areas (e.g. flood plains, riparian areas, and intermittent and ephemeral drainages) shall be managed to maintain natural infiltration and permeability rates.**

The project as described in the EA will likely violate the prescriptions of FW-078. Two of the lift towers will be placed in riparian reserves, removing naturally occurring soils and filling with an impermeable surface. 2,000 cubic yards of material will be excavated and a five-foot high platform will be constructed within 20 feet of an ephemeral drainage at the top lift station. The bottom lift station may also be located in a flood plain and will result in the disturbance of previously undisturbed areas that contributed to groundwater recharge. The EA fails to include any data or analysis establishing that the project will not violate FW-078.

Even more interesting is the fact that the EA completely omits any reference whatsoever to FW-078 in the hydrology portion of the analysis. EA at p. 14. The Forest Service has not even attempted to determine whether the Lift 21 project complies with these requirements.

**3. FW-054 – Water quality associated with management activities shall be in compliance with Oregon State requirements established in accordance with the Federal Clean Water Act.**

The Forest Service appears to have omitted a discussion and analysis of compliance with state water quality standards. The EA states that the Forest Service was to “Put Clean Water Act discussion here.” EA at p. 14. It then refers the reader to “Chapter 4.0, section 4.8.7 of this EA.” *Id.* Chapter 4.0 discusses Consultation and Coordination and does not include any discussion of compliance with state water quality standards. The Forest Service, therefore, has failed to provide the public with adequate information to determine whether the Lift 21 project will, in fact, comply with these requirements. The EA does contain a brief discussion of past monitoring of sediment levels in both the East Fork and Mitchell Creek; however, the EA makes no attempt to

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compare this data to the water quality standards set by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (“DEQ”) pursuant to the Clean Water Act.

We would also like to remind the Forest Service that it must obtain Section 401 certification from DEQ before implementation of the Lift 21 or any other project at Meadows.

Finally, the EA also suggests that the Forest Service has determined that the “division between natural and human-caused erosion and sedimentation is ‘unclear’.” EA at pg. 16. The Forest Service reached this conclusion by using Mitchell Creek as a control basin, measuring anthropogenic effects by comparing sedimentation in the East Fork. The obvious flaw in this scientific reasoning is that Mitchell Creek has been severely impacted by anthropogenic sources and cannot be used as a control. In fact, on the very next page of the EA, the Forest Service claims that the road density in the Mitchell Creek sub-basin is 2.9 mi/mi<sup>2</sup>, whereas the road density in the South Canyon Creek sub-basin is 1.1 mi/mi<sup>2</sup>. EA at pg. 17. Mitchell Creek has, in fact, suffered from significant impacts from operations in the Permit Area, which have increased sediment load above naturally occurring levels. How can the Forest Service trust or cite to a study that clearly relies upon an inadequate control?

**4. FW-057/058 – Evaluations of ability to implement and estimate effectiveness of BMPs shall be made at the project level.**

The Forest Service has again directed to the reader to “Chapter 4.0, section 4.8.7 of this EA” for a discussion of BMPs. The Forest Service has again failed to provide the public with adequate information to determine whether BMPs are, in fact, effective within the Permit Area and whether they will be implemented. We encourage the Forest Service to review the history of environmental damage within the Permit Area and to factor this information into a determination of whether BMPs are effective and whether Meadows has taken effective steps to implement these measures.

**5. RM-1 - New recreational facilities within Riparian Reserves \*  
\* \* should be designed to not prevent meeting Aquatic  
Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives. Construction of these  
facilities should not prevent future attainment of these  
objectives.**

For a discussion of the already apparent lack of compliance with the ACS, please refer to Section E. Since the EA does not demonstrate compliance with the ACS, it is also in violation of RM-1.

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### **G. The EA contains inadequate information regarding impacts to vegetation.**

The EA does not include adequate information that would allow the public to analyze impacts to the ecosystem of the Permit Area. The comments made in the EA result from assumptions or unsubstantiated conclusions without any supporting evidence. We request that the Forest Service provide adequate information to allow for a reasonable determination of the project's impacts.

#### **1. The EA fails to set forth adequate information regarding impacts to the krummholz ecosystems.**

The EA concludes that Lift 21 will pass into the krummholz and that the new road extension providing access to the top terminal also crosses the krummholz and sensitive pincushion communities. "As the lift rises to the upper boundary of the subalpine forest/meadow mosaic, stands transition to krummholz tree island communities with white bark pine and mountain hemlock." EA at 26.

Despite the obvious fact that the road and top lift station are located within the krummholz, the EA summarily dismisses any impacts to this ecosystem, claiming that the removal of the white bark pine will occur "just below the krummholz and pincushion communities." EA at 28. Yet earlier in the same document, the Forest Service claims that as many as 9 small white bark pines would be removed from the upper terminal area. In one place the Forest Service claims that the upper terminal will be located within the krummholz community, yet later in the same document the Forest Service claims the tree removal at the upper terminal takes place just below the krummholz communities. This raises the question of how the Forest Service defines the extent and location of the krummholz ecosystem, information which has not been provided in the EA and which the public needs to have in order to determine the impacts to the krummholz ecosystem. We request that the Forest Service clarify its definition of the krummholz ecosystem and reconcile the inconsistent statements in the EA regarding impacts to the high-alpine krummholz communities.

Furthermore, the EA dismisses impacts from fragmentation, claiming that impacts "are likely to remain tightly localized unless, contrary to projections, summer use increases dramatically." EA at 28. In fact, the Master Plan includes a 1,000% increase in the maximum capacity of persons at one time during the summer. It appears that there is, in fact, a risk that summer capacity will increase dramatically, a risk that the Forest Service has completely disregarded despite the fact that it has been well documented in previous environmental analyses.

This fact only underscores and reinforces the need for a site-specific cumulative impacts analysis focusing on reasonably foreseeable future development as stated above.

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Both past activities and reasonably foreseeable future activities continue to threaten the krummholz ecosystem within the Permit Area. The Forest Service must prepare a site-specific cumulative impacts analysis taking all of this information into account and before proceeding with implementation of site-specific projects under the Master Plan.

**2. The EA fails to provide any information regarding threats to the krummholz ecosystem from snow farming and grooming activities.**

The EA includes a discussion of impacts to the krummholz from snow farming, but it fails to apply that analysis to this project. The EA also fails to consider impacts from grooming on the krummholz ecosystem.

Despite the cursory discussion of the potential impacts from snow farming, the EA lacks any discussion of whether this practice has had a cumulative impact on the krummholz and pincushion communities within the Permit Area. The EA also lacks any discussion of whether any snow farming will take place in the terrain accessed by Lift 21. The public needs this information to analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed project.

The EA also fails to discuss the impacts of grooming on the krummholz and pincushion communities. A recent visit to the high-alpine ecosystem near the top of Cascade indicates that many of the trees have been severely damaged by groomers, having either their crowns chopped or bark removed. The EA fails to discuss whether past grooming operations have had a cumulative impact on the high-alpine ecosystems and whether grooming activities in the terrain accessed by Lift 21 will pose any additional threat to these plant communities.

Please consider photo documentation of damage done to high alpine communities from groomers and skiers (Photos D and E). We also refer you to the attached memo prepared by Doug Jones documenting damage done to “unwanted vegetation” by skiers and snowboarders. We request that the Forest Service collect and provide data on damage done to trees within the krummholz ecosystem resulting from grooming, snow farming and skiers/snowboarders. Without this information, the public has no way to assess the impacts of opening this terrain to more skiers and heavier use. We also request that Meadows discontinue snow farming within communities of white bark pine. Finally, we suggest that Meadows should mark the location of krummholz communities before the beginning of the ski season and then rope off these areas to prevent skiers, snowboarders and groomers from damaging this sensitive ecosystem.

**3. The Forest Service appears to have underestimated cumulative effects to the krummholz plant communities.**

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The Forest Service claims, in table 3-11, that Meadows has cleared only 8 acres of krummholz stringers. We question that figure and again question the inconsistent application of this term by the Forest Service. How does the Forest Service define “krummholz stringers”? How has the Forest Service determined that only 8 of 220 acres have been cleared? Photos F and G suggest that cuts in the Permit Area have cleared significant acreage within the krummholz ecosystem. We hope to see both GIS mapping and supporting documentation providing information on the methodology of determining impacts to the krummholz system in the Analysis File after issuance of the Decision Notice. Furthermore, we refer you to the information in our Administrative Appeal of the Master Plan, which outlines suggestions for using historical aerial photos to determine the true extent of krummholz losses.

We again stress that the krummholz communities have been severely impacted in the past and that reasonably foreseeable future development will present even more threats. The information in the EA is simply inadequate in supporting the conclusions of the Forest Service and in analyzing future site-specific cumulative impacts.

#### **4. The Vegetation Mitigation Measures are inadequate.**

The Forest Service has failed to include adequate mitigation measures in the EA. The EA claims simply that Meadows has started to transplant vegetation from cleared areas into areas suitable for reforestation. The EA completely fails to tie these efforts to the impacts from the Lift 21 project. The EA fails to discuss the scale of these projects. The EA fails to consider impacts from the mitigation project itself, and whether clearing natural vegetation will have an impact on soil erosion or hydrology. The EA fails to consider whether the area receiving transplanted trees includes the krummholz ecosystem, which will suffer many of the impacts to vegetation.

Furthermore, the EA claims that 25 whitebark pines from been planted within the Permit Area. EA at pg. 56. What is the survival rate of these trees? A recent site visit suggests that few if any of these trees are surviving (see Photo H). Previous mitigation measures were planned for the Chunky Swirly Skiway. What is the survival rate of trees planted in conjunction with this mitigation project?

The EA has also failed to consider additional damage to vegetation likely to occur after Lift 21 has been put in place. With regards to both Heather Canyon and Gulch/Cascade, Meadows cut trees after installation of the lift, and the analysis documents did not analyze the impacts of these unplanned cuts. Meadows apparently plans to increase the number of skiers on this terrain, and why should we not expect similar unplanned cuts and damage to vegetation in this instance?

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The Forest Service simply assumes that planting a few trees mitigates direct and site-specific cumulative impacts to the krummholz ecosystem. The Forest Service has provided the public no data to support that conclusion.

### **H. The EA contains inadequate information regarding impacts to aquatic resources.**

Two of the proposed Lift 21 towers will be placed within the riparian reserve to the South Canyon tributary to the East Fork. The EA contains inadequate information and mitigation measures regarding placement of these towers within riparian reserves.

First, the EA fails to adequately analyze impact from soil disturbance. The EA claims that some of the excess soil will be moved to the temporary road above Daisy. It also claims that some of the excavated soil will be “spread around the tower, seeded and mulched.” EA at 12. Without any analysis, the EA concludes that “if any material did erode, the amount would be extremely small and likely to only move a matter of a few feet.”

The EA simply fails to include any data supporting these conclusions. How much material will be excavated from the two tower locations? How deep will the excavation be? How many cubic yards of material will be spread around the footing, and within the riparian reserve? How does the Forest Service know that revegetation efforts will prevent erosion when Meadows has had constant revegetation problems? What is the grade of the slope where the towers will be placed and where the soil will be spread and reseeded? How stable is this slope? How much material is likely to escape during the excavation process? Can Meadows guarantee that no material will get into the South Canyon Tributary (an illegal fill)?

The EA also fails to adequately analyze impacts from removing trees within the riparian reserves. Again, what is the slope stability and can removal of trees increase the risk of slope failure? Do the trees contribute to channel stability where the banks consist mainly of loose, sandy soils?

The EA also fails to include appropriate mitigation measures. The only mitigation measure listed suggests that Meadows will be placing downed logs “in and along streams.” First of all, Meadows has repeatedly and illegally filled streams in the past with downed timber, and we strongly urge the Forest Service to prohibit this type of activity. Previous log fills in streams are now beginning to erode and have severely altered channel formation. Second, this measure fails to mitigate impacts from sedimentation and excavation in a riparian reserve. The measures listed on pg. 12 also fail to mitigate impacts to the stream but simply list a number of management practices that are not proven to prevent sediment delivery.

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Finally, we also question the calculations of Aggregate Recovery Percentage and feel that the EA may have understated the risk of damaging peak flows in the Mitchell Creek and South Canyon Tributaries watersheds. Unless the Forest Service want another appeal on this issue, we hope to see fully detailed information regarding the peak flow analysis in the Analysis Files once we review them following issuance of the Decision Notice.

Thank you for considering our comments. Once again, please refer as well to all of the documentation in support of our Administrative Appeal of the Master Plan. We fully incorporate that information by reference and can provide a copy upon request.

We suggest the No Action alternative and assert that implementation of the chosen alternative requires preparation of an EIS. The Forest Service must not rely upon this EA in approving and implementing the Lift 21 project, because the Forest Service would be in violation of numerous federal statutes, including NEPA, NFMA, the CWA and the APA.

Sincerely,

Chris Winter