

Water Conservation Plan Taos Ski Valley, Inc.

Contents

- 1. Introduction3
- 2. Purpose and Scope.....3
- 3. Water Quantity Strategies.....3
 - 3.1. Snowmaking and Snow Storage Optimization3
 - 3.2. Infrastructure Improvements3
 - 3.3. Operational Practices4
- 4. Water Quality Strategies.....4
 - 4.1. Pollution Prevention4
 - 4.2. Watershed Protection5
- 5. Monitoring5
 - 5.1. Water Quantity Monitoring5
 - 5.2. Water Quality Monitoring5
- 6. Public Reporting.....6
- 7. Mitigation Measures6
- 8. Community Engagement.....6
- 9. Compliance and Review7
- 10. Map of Rio Hondo Watershed with Taos Ski Valley USFS Special Use Permit highlighted in purple.....8
- 11. Detailed map of Taos Ski Valley USFS Special Use Permit area designated by dotted yellow line.9

1. Introduction

This document outlines a comprehensive water conservation plan to align with the Carson National Forest’s Project-Specific Design Criteria for the “Taos Ski Valley Gondola and Other Improvements” Decision Notice. The plan incorporates water quality and quantity strategies, monitoring requirements, and public reporting as mandated by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this water conservation plan is to ensure sustainable water use within the Taos Ski Valley USFS Special Use Permit (SUP) area, minimizing environmental impacts on the Rio Hondo watershed while supporting ski area operations. The plan addresses water quality, quantity, conservation strategies, and public transparency. It considers existing water rights (e.g., Permit Nos. 01701A, RG-44134), and facilities, as well as plans to conserve water at new facilities.

3. Water Quantity Strategies

3.1. Snowmaking and Snow Storage Optimization

1. Implementation of high-efficiency snowmaking equipment to maximize beneficial use.
2. Use weather forecasting, temperature automation, and snowpack monitoring to optimize snowmaking schedules, ensuring most water returns to the stream in spring/early summer.
3. Implement snow fencing and boot-packing to enhance accumulation and stockpile snow on shaded northern aspects to provide extended runoff to the watershed.

3.2. Infrastructure Improvements

1. Ensure water sufficiency for existing and proposed facilities, including the Lift 7 Restaurant (new well limited to 1.0 acre foot per year for drinking/sanitary uses) and other improvements, while supporting fire suppression and downstream users.
2. Install low-flow and water-less fixtures in on-mountain facilities. (e.g., restrooms, restaurants, lodges).

3. Upgraded Water Tank (five million gallons (MG)) and Booster Station to improve water storage and distribution efficiency, allowing for surface water diversion and storage during warmer periods during the October to April snowmaking season for use in cold windows, and minimizing evaporative losses without utilizing additional water rights.
4. Maintain existing facilities such as the Main Pump Station (Pit House), Kachina Pump Station, and booster stations for efficient snowmaking water use.

3.3. Operational Practices

1. Train staff on water conservation practices and protocols.
2. Irrigate landscaping with natural precipitation.
3. Review annual water usage for activities within the SUP area outside of snowmaking to optimize efficiency for essential operations.
4. Integrate fire suppression capabilities using the five MG tank and snowmaking infrastructure to protect the Village and watershed.

4. Water Quality Strategies

4.1. Pollution Prevention

1. Maintain or improve water quality in the Rio Hondo watershed.
2. TSVI will continue its nonuse of snowmaking additives.
3. Implement erosion control measures (e.g., silt fences, vegetative buffers) around construction sites for the Base-to-Base Gondola, Lift 2, Lift 8, and other projects.
4. Regularly inspect and maintain stormwater management systems to prevent runoff contamination, complying with USEPA-NPDES permits for discharges.
5. TSVI has committed to the continued removal of PFAS chemicals from its operations to protect water quality.

4.2. Watershed Protection

1. Protect riparian areas along the Lake Fork, Rio Hondo, and other streams/springs within the permit area. This will be accomplished by TSVI acquiring and complying with all permitting necessary to work around riparian areas, implementation of erosion and sedimentation controls, and the restoration of riparian areas that have been disturbed.
2. Continue the annual revegetation of bare soil and disturbed areas as soon as possible after completion of ground-disturbance activities. This includes the implementation of seeding and soil erosion controls, particularly on steep slopes.
3. Restrict construction activities near sensitive water bodies (wetlands, tier 2 and 3 streams, WOTUS) during critical ecological periods (nesting, hatching, mating, etc.).
4. Collaborate with local environmental groups and acequias to restore and maintain watershed health, sharing usage data transparently.

5. Monitoring

5.1. Water Quantity Monitoring

1. Record biweekly water usage for each system within the SUP area and compile monthly summaries, ensuring diversions do not exceed permitted amounts. Monthly summaries will be distributed to interested parties including the Rio Hondo Watershed group.
2. Conduct annual audits to assess water conservation progress, identify areas for improvement, and confirm consumptive use relative to the Rio Hondo watershed. This will be published in TSVI's annual impact report.

5.2. Water Quality Monitoring

1. Conduct quarterly water quality tests for key parameters (e.g., pH, turbidity, contaminants) in streams and groundwater within the permit area.
2. Monitor runoff from construction sites and snowmaking operations to ensure compliance with water quality standards.
3. Partner with third-party environmental consultants (e.g., Glorieta Geoscience A Division of GZA Geoenvironmental, Inc.) to verify monitoring results.

6. Public Reporting

1. Publish monthly water usage and metering data, as required by the USFS decision notice (modified from quarterly).
2. Provide a summary of water conservation efforts, water quality monitoring results, and compliance with water rights permits in an annual report.
3. Continue to interface with Rio Hondo Watershed group meetings to share updates on the water conservation plan, discuss usage, and gather community feedback, including feedback from acequias.

7. Mitigation Measures

1. Adhere to USFS project design criteria to minimize environmental impacts from approved projects (e.g., Base-to-Base Gondola, Lift 7 Restaurant, Nordic Trails).
2. Develop contingency plans for drought or water shortage scenarios, including prioritized water allocation, noting the Ski Valley's non-participation in shortage sharing due to winter diversions on the SUP.
3. Ensure all construction activities comply with Best Management Practices (BMPs) for water conservation and watershed protection, including obtaining permits for new wells and stormwater pollution prevention (e.g., Lift 7 Restaurant).

8. Community Engagement

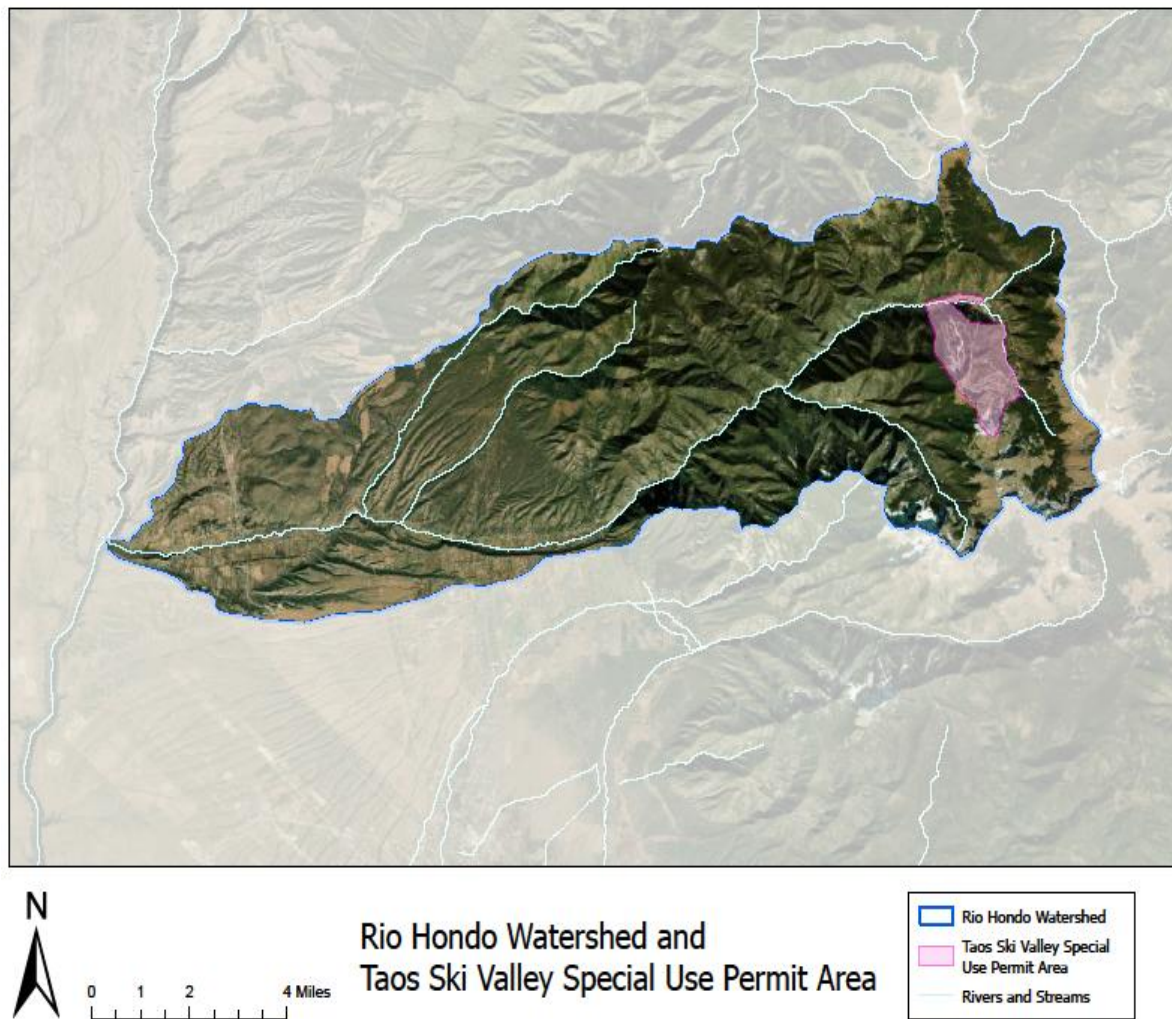
1. Engage with downstream communities, acequias, and adjacent neighbors including the Rio Hondo Watershed group to address concerns about water use and watershed impacts, sharing data on usage and benefits (e.g., spring melt return).
2. Provide educational materials on water conservation to guests and staff.
3. Partner with local organizations to promote watershed stewardship initiatives, aligning with community give-back efforts (e.g., support for non-profits, school programs). Examples of this include the Uplift Youth fund, which subsidizes the education of the community's youth on watershed stewardship initiatives.

9. Compliance and Review

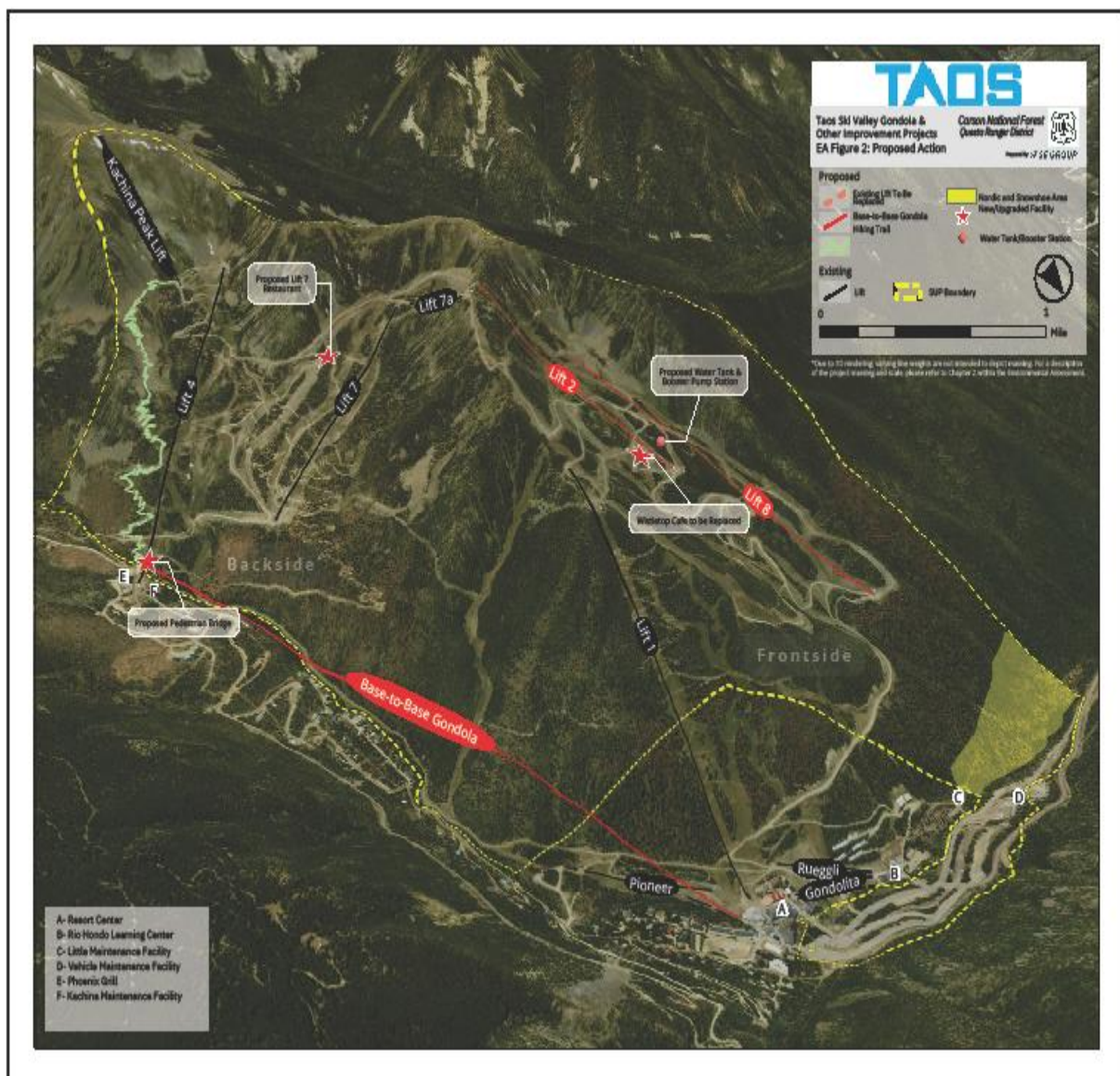
1. Submit annual compliance reports to the Carson National Forest Supervisor.
2. Participate in USFS-led environmental reviews for any proposed changes to water-related operations.
3. Maintain records of all water usage, quality monitoring, and conservation efforts.

DRAFT

10. Map of Rio Hondo Watershed with Taos Ski Valley USFS Special Use Permit highlighted in purple.



11. Detailed map of Taos Ski Valley USFS Special Use Permit area designated by dotted yellow line.



PAGE BREAK



0 1 2 4 Miles

Rio Hondo Watershed and Taos Ski Valley Special Use Permit Area

-  Rio Hondo Watershed
-  Taos Ski Valley Special Use Permit Area
-  Rivers and Streams

PAGE BREAK

