

Time to comment on Mt. Rose's expansion plans

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest officials are seeking comments on the Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe Atoma Area Expansion draft environmental impact statement.

The draft EIS analyzed the environmental effects of expanding the ski area permit boundary and associated facilities to improve the quality of recreational offerings. The purpose of the expansion project is to provide additional terrain that is comfortable and appropriate for lower-level skiers and improves the ski area's ability to provide a consistent and quality snow surface on key ski terrain throughout the season.

The draft EIS analyzed three alternatives: no action, proposed action (Alternative 2) and the Forest's preferred action (Alternative 3). Alternative 2 and 3 are similar in that they would amend the existing special use permit by approximately 112 acres to incorporate a portion of the Atoma Area located on the north side of Mount Rose Highway. In addition, a chairlift and skier bridge across the highway, 11 new ski trails, and a 5 million gallon water tank to support snowmaking would be constructed.

A Forest Plan amendment would also be required for both action alternatives, which would restrict future commercial development on approximately 3,446 acres of NFS lands in the area known as Galena Land Exchange with the exception of the 112-acre Atoma and 168-acre Chutes areas.

The difference between the two action alternatives is that Alternative 3 would require a two-chair lift configuration to service the Atoma Area. The lift configuration would require one chairlift to cross over the skier bridge rather than directly over the highway. Additionally, a restroom would be

located on NFS land instead of on private land.

The comment period ends April 18. The draft EIS is **online**.