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## **Preliminary Overview of Donner Summit Proposed Foster-Syme Project Features and Impacts July 10, 2007**

In October 2005, a partnership of Todd Foster (Foster Enterprises) and Kirk Syme (Woodstock Development) purchased the nearly 3,000-acre Royal Gorge property.

Foster and Syme (F-S) immediately drew up plans for their proposed resort and have started into the Placer County development process. To date only conceptual plans have been offered. Here is what is in those plans, as of July 10, 2007:

- Over 1000 new housing units
- An unknown number of hotel rooms and time-shares
- Four separated developed areas, called 'Camps'
- Two new lakes in the North American River headwaters
- Raising the dam at Van Norden Lake
- Dumping treated waste water into the South Yuba River
- Ski runs and lifts ski on Razor Back Ridge
- A major ski lift connection to Sugar Bowl
- New roads
- Elimination of many of the existing wilderness ski trails
- Four new commercial centers
- A bridge over the railroad tracks at Soda Springs Road
- Dredging and draining water from Serene Lakes
- An viewing tower over the North Fork of the American River
- Diversions from Ice Lakes to fill the two new lakes; water that would otherwise flow over spillway into Serena Creek, a Class 1 stream.
- One of the two new lakes is located at upper end of wetlands; the headwaters for Mackay Creek which feeds Palisades Lake.

To date F-S has not identified a water source for the residential homes, the hotels, the commercial centers, or snow making. They have not identified how they plan to treat the waste from this large development. They have not identified how they will deal with a comprehensive planning process that deals with the project elements in Placer and Nevada Counties.

### **The proposed 'Camps'**

1. *Ski Camp*: 600 residences, hotel, ski lodge, commercial center, downhill ski slope, lift connection to Sugar Bowl.
2. *Lake Camp*: 300 residences, two (2) new lakes, club house, horse barn and stables, four season private recreational amenity, commercial
3. *Wilderness Camp*: 50 overnight cabins, campground, cook house, Pt. Mariah Lodge (overnight lodging)
4. *Summit Camp*: In Nevada County, 18 houses on Lake Van Norden, employee housing, cross country ski lodge, commercial center, interpretive center, portal for the cross country trails.

## **Impacts**

Development of this scale on this fragile environment would forever change the entire Donner Summit area. Views, habitat, water supplies, fire safety air quality, and affordable housing would all be denigrated by this proposed resort expansion. It will also overwhelm the existing communities of Serene Lakes, Palisades Lake, and Soda Springs.

Key issues include:

- *Wildlife Habitat*: new roads and subdivisions would fragment open space, block existing wildlife corridors, and would reduce habitat for a number of special-status species.
- *Water Quality*: new dams and run-off from new ski runs, acres of pavement, and miles of road would impact the headwaters of the Yuba and American Rivers.
- *Water Supply*: water is scarce at the crest of the Sierra; no source has been identified.
- *Sewage Disposal*: Existing sewage treatment facilities discharge into the Yuba River and are already at maximum capacity.
- *Transportation*: major, high-occupancy development would add significant traffic to Donner Summit neighborhoods, Old Highway 40, and I-80; the initial proposal includes only one egress.

***Most of all, proposed development would destroy Donner Summit's unique sense of place.***

## **For More Information**

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