



Cooper Spur Wild and Free Coalition
 PO Box 100
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Ten Reasons to Oppose Destination Resort Expansion

Working to preserve and protect the biological integrity and historic nature of the northeast side of Mt. Hood

Coalition Response to "Friends of Cooper Spur Mountain Resort's" *'Top 10 Reasons to Support a Destination Resort*

<p>#1 Tax Base</p>	<p><i>Meadows: "The development of Cooper Spur Mountain Resort creates an important new tax base in Hood River County. The development of Cooper Spur Mountain Resort is estimated to result in an increase of property tax revenue to Hood River County from the current \$10,000 to an estimated \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000 annually."</i></p>	<p>Coalition response: Increased service costs offset revenue increases. While Hood River has become a destination resort during the past 15 years, taxes have not gone down. A destination resort also threatens to push out the agricultural economy, further damaging Hood River County's tax base.</p>
<p>#2 Employment</p>	<p><i>Meadows: "Cooper Spur Mountain Resort will be an important new source of jobs in Hood River County. Approximately 200 permanent jobs will be created. Jobs created will include entry level, supervisors, managers, directors, and executive level positions."</i></p>	<p>Coalition response: Agriculture in Hood River County accounts for 50% of personal income. Development of a destination resort will likely push out agriculture, resulting in the loss of many family wage jobs. The majority of jobs created by a large resort will be seasonal and low wage. Workers in these jobs will be a net burden to the county budget. The growth of Hood River's resort industry, featuring exactly the same types of jobs, has not stemmed unemployment. On the contrary, unemployment has risen during the rise of Hood River's popularity.</p>
<p># 3 Economic Contribution</p>	<p><i>Meadows: "Construction activities at Cooper Spur Mountain Resort will provide a steady, sustained demand for local craftsman, artisans, and those high quality construction trades. Construction expenditures of \$10,000,000 to \$12,000,000 annually for the next 10 to 20 years is anticipated. Annual payroll for resort operations is estimated to exceed \$6,000,000 upon completion of the resort facilities. These wages are then spent locally and will create a "multiplier effect" which stimulates the local economy, creating increased earnings for many Hood River County residents."</i></p>	<p>Coalition response: Precedents throughout the Columbia River Gorge indicate construction will likely be completed by large contractors from Portland. In fact, Franklin Drake, head of Mt. Hood Meadows, is a Portland developer. Nothing suggests Mr. Drake will use local businesses. Additionally, a resort at the far south end of the County will require upgraded roads and new police and fire installations - a considerable burden on County finances.</p>
<p># 4 Integrity of Unique and Valuable Resources</p>	<p><i>Meadows: "The Plan for Cooper Spur Mountain Resort is based upon a professional planning effort to understand and inventory the natural resources and wildlife of the property. Extensive field work combined with GIS mapping has made possible a rigorously resource-based land plan. The field work of the environmental scientists revealed a clear, appropriate pattern of land use and land management which has evolved into our plan. The computer mapping of Cooper Spur Mountain Resort's resources and other natural factors demonstrates a clearly distinguishable pattern of those lands most suited for conservation and those most suitable for settlement."</i></p>	<p>Coalition response: Meadows environmental track record is deplorable. The existing, trash-strewn MHM ski area is characterized by rampant erosion, defiled wetlands and silted streams. Mt. Hood Meadows repeatedly states that it doesn't any plans or adequate information to reveal to the public yet it claims to know exactly how to "mitigate" damage to our precious natural resources.</p>

# 5 Public Access / Education	<i>Meadows: "Public trails within Cooper Spur Mountain Resort will be provided. Special on-going public education and interpretive programs will continue to be developed and operated to provide organized, scheduled public access for teachers, students and their families."</i>	Coalition response: The expansion of Cooper Spur Ski Area could threaten the historic and beloved Tilly Jane Trail. Must we sacrifice a natural heritage for paved trails catering to the well-off customers of MHM? The present MHM ski resort doesn't have these. Wouldn't that be the place to start?
#6: Recreational Opportunities	<i>Meadows: "The Cooper Spur Mountain Resort is for the enjoyment of the public. Visitors from out-of-town as well as locals will enjoy the high quality recreational facilities. The plan includes an ice skating rink, tennis courts, paved biking and walking trails, mountain biking, swimming, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, tubing, skiing and a spa."</i>	Coalition response: Hood River County already has these recreational amenities. In contrast, little opportunity remains for experiencing pristine mountain slopes. Cooper Spur offers unique experiences for the backcountry skier, backpacker, snowshoer, climber and hiker. We could lose this valuable resource forever, while MHM makes millions of dollars in profits.
#7 Location	<i>Meadows: Cooper Spur Mountain Resort is easily accessible to the Gorge residents as well as residents of the greater Portland area. Hood River County is known for its wide variety of recreational opportunities, and an expanded destination resort will fit with that image and history. The resort is served by two roads that have excess capacity available."</i>	Coalition response: By definition a 'destination resort' is for people from elsewhere. This claim contradicts '6' above
#8 Previous Commitment to Resort Uses	<i>Meadows: "The Cooper Spur area already has 50 overnight units (15 for rentals, 35 vacation homes). Recreation has been occurring in this area for over 100 years. Cooper Spur is the natural location for an expanded resort because the resort has already been started and just needs to be finished. The infrastructure is already in place (power, telephone, access roads)."</i>	Coalition response: The impact of 450 luxury accommodations would be many times greater than that of the existing 50 comparatively modest ones. Roads and utilities would be upgraded at the expense of existing County residents.
# 9 Preservation	<i>Meadows: "The company will include conservation easements to protect streams and wetlands, as well as provide for wildlife connectivity and movement through the property for wildlife including deer and elk."</i>	Coalition response: Per '4' above, MHM's environmental track record is deplorable. Why should we trust a company that has done so much damage to the other side of the mountain?
#10: Experience	<i>Meadows: Meadows North LLC, the company who is the owner of the property, is owned by Mt. Hood Meadows. With over 35 years of experience operating high-quality recreational facilities on Mt. Hood and with hundreds of talented local employees and managers the community can be confident that the resort will be developed and operated in a professional and high-quality fashion."</i>	Coalition response: The community can be confident that the resort will expertly exploit public property. Moreover, the "talented local employees" change continually because they are so poorly treated by Mt. Hood Meadows.

In short . . .

HOOD RIVER is a "destination resort" and uniquely appealing due to the serenity of the southern county and Mt. Hood's north side. Construction of another "destination resort" would eliminate this tranquility and compromise the existing resort industry.

Mt. Hood has five ski areas and, while alpine skiing is a very popular sport, ski enthusiasts recognize the importance of diverse recreational opportunities. Hood River County needs to preserve primitive areas for nature study, hiking and backcountry skiing. Expansion of Cooper Spur would occur at the expense of these and related activities on Mt. Hood's pristine north side.