

Superior Highland Backcountry Launches "Save Moose Mountain" Campaign

Lutsen, MN -In response to the Superior National Forest Service's release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Lutsen Mountain Corporation's proposed 495-acre expansion onto public lands, local non-profit Superior Highland Backcountry is launching a campaign to "Save Moose Mountain". With a mission to "preserve and expand backcountry ski opportunities along the North Shore of Lake Superior", they are firmly opposed to the expansion. Elli King, SHB Chairperson, says: "Moose Mountain, where Lutsen Mountain is asking to develop, is the largest, most prominent backcountry ski feature in Minnesota. It's not like out west, where it is common to have ski resorts operating on public land. There is not mountain after mountain up here. We can't let them privatize this singular, precious place."

Lutsen Mountain currently operates wholly on private land, which includes the eastern third of Moose Mountain. The special use permit the

Corporation has applied for requests permission to develop the following on public land managed by the Superior National Forest:

- Construction of seven new chairlifts and one surface lift;
- Development of 324 acres of additional ski terrain, including approximately 175 acres of developed ski trails and 149 acres of gladed terrain;
- Expansion of guest services including two new base facilities, maintenance facilities, and a mountain-top chalet; and
- Development of approximately 1,260 additional parking spaces, construction of approximately 5 miles of permanent access roads, and construction of approximately 0.9 miles of temporary access roads.

Rory Scoles, President and Founder of SHB and owner of Lutsen Recreation, the local downhill pro shop, says that backcountry skiing is the fastest growing sector of winter recreation nationwide. "Here in the Midwest we

are about 10 years behind industry trends," says Scoles, "but we are caught up now and interest in our projects is really high." Scoles says that people are very excited to hear that they can backcountry ski right here in Minnesota. "There is also an economic aspect to our projects. This activity will attract a new, growing demographic to our area."

SHB has begun construction this fall on their first gladed ski area, in Finland, MN, which they say will be the beginning of an eventual hut-to-hut trail system similar to those found in the Mountain West. In the meantime they are encouraging people to submit comments on the proposed resort expansion project, which are due by Oct. 25th. "Moose Mountain really is the crown jewel of our state", says Scoles. "There are a handful of really nice glades up here, but they all pale in comparison to Moose." More information about their efforts can be found at savemoosemountain.com, and at superiorhighlandbc.org.

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