



# THE TAOS NEWS

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## TSV trail construction starting

Staff report

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— There's a bit of time before snow blankets the ground in Taos Ski Valley, and the Carson National Forest is allowing contractors to use that window to get started on major trail work in the mountains above Taos. However, the final details differ from the original proposal.

The Forest Service approved the "2018 Taos Ski Valley Trails Project" in a Sept. 6 decision. The project was proposed by the ski valley corporation, which holds a special use permit in the forest.

The original scoping letter, released June 5, said the ski valley was proposing to build six new mountain bike trails totally approximately 7.2 miles. But the final decision calls for building eight new mountain bike trails totaling about 15 miles. The Carson National Forest representative was not available for comment about the change.

The decision also approves re-routing the first three-quarters of a mile of Williams Lake Trail. That trail is about 2 miles long and is by far one of the most popular hiking destinations in the state.

The project did not require an extensive environmental review like an environmental impact statement although the forest service did review potential impacts to wildlife, water and cultural resources. A biological evaluation was prepared to address Forest Service sensitive species.

"This project will have no effect on 23 out of 25 sensitive species," the decision reads. Again, the project representative was not available to discuss the potential impacts on wildlife.

The project had a 14-day public comment period, during which 43 people submitted comments. Of those, 13 referenced the mountain bike trails and 30 the Williams Lake Trail. An initial review found about half the comments were negative.