



"Corporate mega resorts aren't really about skiing at all, but about providing a scripted leisure experience, with base villages, shopping clusters, and lodging all carefully laid out to maximize spending.

'I would draw a parallel to Disney,' says one former ski executive."

-Illustration and quote from Hal Clifford, "The Fall Line Meets the Bottom Line." *Outside*: November 2002.

A DESTINATION RESORT ON COOPER SPUR? DON'T BUY IT, HOOD RIVER COUNTY!

A number of politicians, businessmen, and residents of Mt. Hood communities may still believe that a destination resort at Cooper Spur may be a good thing for the regional economy. Unfortunately, evidence indicates that resort development at Cooper Spur would be more of an act of irrational ambition than a sound economic investment. Any new development of a mountain resort at Cooper Spur would have to deal with an existing over-supply of recreational amenities, and likely draw business away from established communities in the area. It would also have to contend with

a history of failure in ski-resort investments. Many groups have argued that Mt. Hood Meadows' development ambitions are harmful to our natural environment. As it turns out, new development at Cooper Spur would almost certainly harm our economic well-being as well.

While large ski resorts such as Mt. Hood Meadows have consistently expanded in the past two decades, the ski industry's own statistics fail to show any significant signs of growth in the number of lift tickets sold, both

in Oregon and nationwide. With steady new investments in bigger, faster chair lifts and new ski terrain at various Oregon ski areas (including Mt. Bachelor, Timberline, and Mt. Hood Meadows), a new ski development at Cooper Spur is clearly unnecessary.

"I DON'T PARTICULARLY BELIEVE IN THESE VILLAGES," said one top ski industry executive. "I just don't see them being as successful as the developers envision."

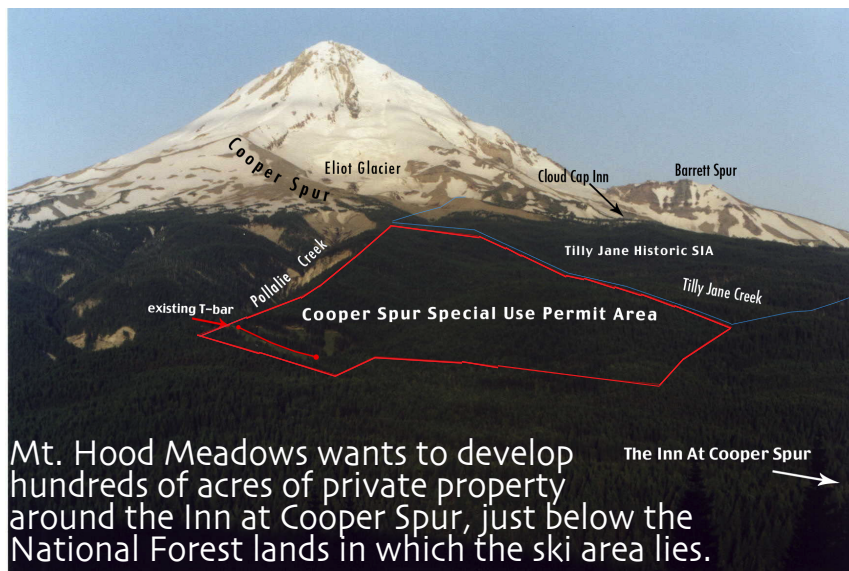
-Clifford, 2002

So why build it? On its own, a large, corporate ski area at Cooper Spur would probably be unprofitable: Cooper Spur is at a low elevation with poor snow conditions, and is also

more distant from Portland than other Mt. Hood ski areas. However, Mt. Hood Meadows owns hundreds of acres of private land below the Cooper Spur ski area. On these lands, the company intends to sell Oregon's first destination ski resort, with hotels, golf courses, and vacation homes.

Mt. Hood area hoteliers already experience lower-than-average occupancy rates for hotel rooms, with strong seasonal trends (hotels are generally full in the summer, and nearly empty in the winter). The success of a destination ski resort at Cooper Spur would rely on drawing scarce market

"In the real world, the ski industry operates outside the rules of Econ 101. MUCH OF ITS GROWTH IS FLOATED BY EXPLOITATION OF PUBLIC LANDS (where the slopes are) which in turn creates traffic in the... private-property villages below." -Clifford, 2002



Mt. Hood Meadows wants to develop hundreds of acres of private property around the Inn at Cooper Spur, just below the National Forest lands in which the ski area lies.

share, and tourism dollars, away from Hood River and Government Camp. By drawing ski-related business up the mountain, it would also exacerbate tourism's seasonal dichotomy in Hood River, and threaten the city's economic viability.

Furthermore, the financial soundness of large-scale destination ski resorts is extremely suspect. One large conglomerate of destination ski resorts, the American Skiing Company, has never shown a profit in the history of its existence, and its stock was recently de-

listed from the New York Stock Exchange. Even the share price of Intrawest, the most successful development conglomerate and the owner of Whistler-Blackcomb, has remained stagnant in the past five years, with increasing debt-to-equity ratios.

Development of Cooper Spur will only sell Hood River County short. It threatens not only wildlife corridors and water supplies, but also the existing business establishments of Mt. Hood area communities. The leaders of Hood River County can, and should, find better investments in economic development.

For more information, visit <www.cooperspur.org>