

Pajarito Mountain Water Pipeline Project

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is for the Pajarito Recreation LC (a new Sipapu Group company) to transport water from Los Alamos Reservoir and/or the Los Alamos County potable water tank to the Pajarito Ski Hill for snow making purposes for the 2014-15 seasons.

Location

This project is located in Los Alamos County, utilizing the Los Alamos Canyon Road and the Camp May Road corridors to the Pajarito Ski Hill as a water pipeline corridor. See Map.

Background

Due to a series of low snow years, the Los Alamos Ski Club no longer has the finances to continue to run the downhill Ski Operation on Pajarito Mountain. The County and Los Alamos Ski Club are negotiating with the Sipapu Group to take over the ski area operations and possibly sell some of the ski hill land. In order to have a viable operation, the Pajarito Recreation LC needs the capacity to make snow and fill the existing 10 million gallon pond on Pajarito Mountain that has not yet been used.

The County has offered the stored water from Los Alamos Reservoir to Pajarito Recreation LC, rather than just let it go downstream, since the reservoir needs to be emptied by the end of the summer for further construction. The County also plan to sell 5-10 million gallons of water from their potable water tank at the base of the Camp May Ski Hill road for the 2014 season, and up to another 10 million gallons in the 2015 season, which would then be transported up the temporary pipeline.

The pipeline/pumps are a temporary solution for Pajarito Recreation LC to obtain water for snow making for the 2014-15 seasons while the group explores other options for filling the current pond and potential additional ponds. These options include an on-site well, an enhanced run off collection system, and a permanent water line from other Los Alamos County water sources.

Details of the Proposed Action

The pipeline would be 4 to 6 inch plastic pipe, 36,000 feet long (6.8 miles), and would require three to ten pumping stations. Each pumping station would be housed within a 12 by 12 foot shed. The pumps would be powered by electricity supplied by the nearby power lines. The pipeline and pumps would be placed above ground in the disturbed channel next to the road or along other existing disturbance. The temporary pipeline would pump 250 to 300 gallons per minute of water from the Los Alamos Reservoir and/or Los Alamos Water Tank at the base of the Camp May Ski Road. Engineering specifications, pump locations, and type of pumps would be coordinated with the Forest Service before installation commences.

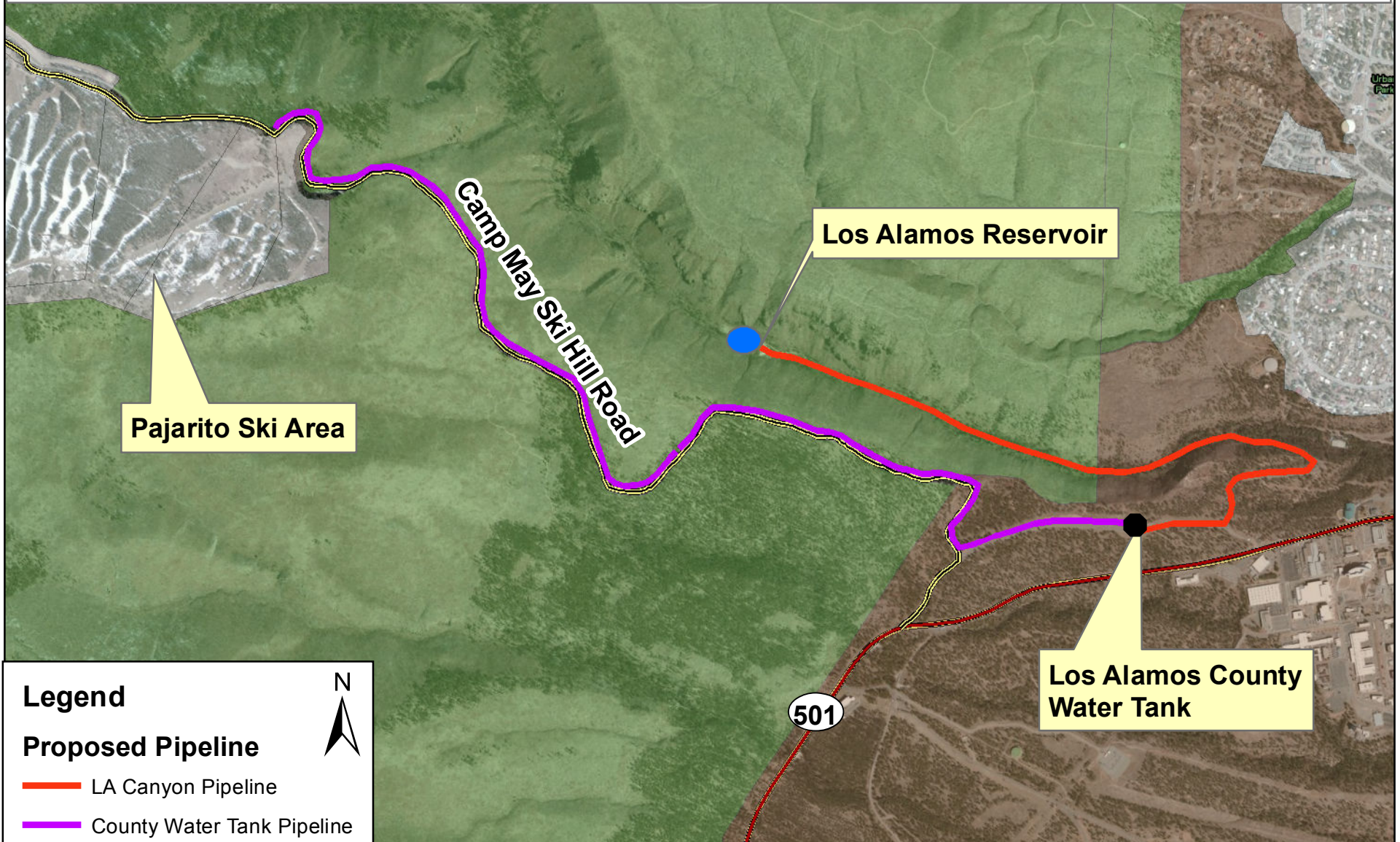
It is estimated that the pumps for the temporary pipeline would run 24 hours a day for 24 days to deliver 10 million gallons of water to the pond. The temporary pipeline from the Los Alamos Reservoir, would be used once, subject to timing and logistics, to transport that stored water (5 million gallons) this summer using both sections of pipeline (red and purple) as shown on the map. The section below the County Water Tank, shown in red on the attached map, would be removed in the fall, if used at all. The remaining 5 million gallons of additional water, or the whole 10 million gallons of water (if the LA Reservoir water was not used), would come from the County potable water stored in the water tank at the base of the Camp May Ski Hill Road. In the spring of 2015, the pipeline from the water tank to Pajarito Mountain (shown in purple on the attached map) would again be used to fill the pond for the next winter, utilizing up to another 10 million gallons from the County water tank.

Los Alamos County utility representatives report that there is more than enough water, water rights and availability of water to meet the Pajarito Recreation LC's request for water.



Española Ranger District
Santa Fe National Forest

Pajarito Temporary Water Pipeline Project Pajarito Recreation LP (a Sipapu Company)



Legend

Proposed Pipeline

- LA Canyon Pipeline
- County Water Tank Pipeline

Land Ownership

- DOE
- PRIVATE
- USDA FOREST SERVICE



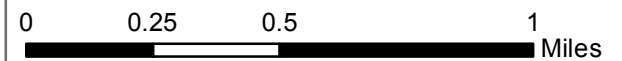
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Santa Fe National Forest (505)438-5300.

Data Projection: UTM Zone 13 NAD83

This information was released on July 2014. lb



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The Espanola District of the Santa Fe National Forest is considering a Special Use Permit by the newly formed Pajarito Recreation LC company, which is a subgroup of the Sipapu Group, currently in negotiations with Los Alamos County and the Pajarito Ski Club for land and operations of the Pajarito Ski Area. Pajarito Recreation LC is looking for a short-term water source for snow making for the 2014 and 2015 seasons while it explores options for longer term water sources. An additional benefit of the water could be its availability for fire fighting during the 2015 fire season.

Therefore, the proposal is to authorize for less than one year, installation of a temporary water pipeline and associated pumps to move approximately 5 million gallons of water from the Los Alamos Reservoir and 5 million gallons of water from the Los Alamos County potable water tank at the base of the Camp May Road to the parking area at Pajarito Mountain. From there, existing permanent infrastructure would take the water to the existing 10 million gallon pond near the top of the mountain. If timing and logistics are not favorable to move water out of Los Alamos Reservoir, all 10 million gallons may be taken from the County water tank, and the pipeline and pumps out of Los Alamos Reservoir, down Los Alamos Canyon and up West Road (shown in red on the attached map) may not be put in place. Whether the water in Los Alamos Reservoir is pumped to the ski hill or not, the reservoir needs to be emptied to allow for dredging operations by the County planned for this fall.

The pipeline would be placed on the ground surface extending for 36,000 feet (6.8 miles), down Los Alamos Canyon, up West Road, Camp May Road, and to the Ski area (see attached map and preliminary details). Temporary pump stations would be placed along this route. The stations would consist of a water tank and pump, likely housed in an enclosure to protect the equipment and reduce the noise levels of the equipment.

The section of pipeline (shown in purple on the attached map) from the Los Alamos County water tank would remain in place over the winter and be available for pumping another 10 million gallons of water into the pond during the Spring of 2015.

Because of the short-term nature of this proposal and the lack of extraordinary circumstances associated with it, we anticipate authorizing this project under a categorical exclusion, which means an environmental assessment would not be prepared to document the expected effects.

Although the higher level of analysis is not necessary, the Española Ranger District is interested in hearing your thoughts and concerns about this proposal, and we request your comments on this project. To be most helpful, please send your comments by August 22, 2014. Please send electronic comments to comments-southwestern-santafe-espanola@fs.fed.us with "Pajarito Water Pipeline" in the subject line. Acceptable electronic formats are .pdf, .txt, .doc, .rtf, or other formats readable with Microsoft Word. Mail your comments to: Sandy Hurlocker, Española Ranger District, PO Box 3307, Española, NM 87533). Comments may be hand-delivered to the Española District Office, 1710 N Riverside Drive, Española, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday excluding Federal holidays. To submit oral comments, please call Lynn Bjorklund at (505) 753-7331 to arrange an appointment. Project documents are available for review at the Española Ranger District, or on the forest's website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/santafe/landmanagement/projects>.

I also want to take the opportunity to let you know that two laws¹ signed this year mean that the notice, comment, and appeal procedures no longer apply to categorical exclusions (CEs). These changes took effect on March 5, 2014. The Forest Service no longer offers notice, comment and appeal for categorically excluded projects, including this one.

The Forest Service will continue to offer public involvement opportunities for categorically excluded projects (such as this scoping notice) as provided for in its NEPA procedures found in 36 CFR 220. Notice, comment, and objections apply to proposed projects analyzed with an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

For technical questions on the Pajarito Water Pipeline project, please contact Lynn Bjorklund at (505) 753-7331. For questions related to the NEPA procedures, please call Julie Bain, Forest NEPA Coordinator, at (505) 438-5443.

I look forward to your comments on this project.

Sincerely,

Sandy Hurlocker
Española District Ranger

¹ Section 431 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 (Pub. L. No. 113-76) states that notice, comment, and appeal do not apply to CEs. Section 8006 of the 2014 Farm Bill (Pub. L. No. 113-79) repeals the Appeals Reform Act and states that the new objection process does not apply to CEs.