



Board of County Commissioners

October 9, 2020

Forest Service, USDA
Caribou-Targhee National Forest
% Teton Basin District Ranger - Jay Pence
PO Box 777
Driggs, ID 83422

RE: Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects

Dear Mr. Pence,

As the Caribou-Targhee National Forest begins the scoping process for the Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects, the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) would like to go on record with the following comments/questions and request that we are recognized at a cooperating agency moving forward. The scale of the proposed Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects could transform Grand Targhee Resort from primarily a regional amenity into a major destination resort.

Please see below a summary of our concerns/questions regarding potential impacts to Teton County and our community members as a result of the proposed Grand Targhee Resort Expansion request:

1. County Roads/Transportation:

- Increased vehicle traffic into and out of Teton County, Idaho leading to congestion, air pollution and degradation of state highways and county roads.
- Increased use of alternate routes to Grand Targhee Resort leading to higher traffic counts, dust, accidents, and degradation of rural county roads as well as the quality of life for the community members living along those routes.
- Increased wildlife-vehicle collision on Ski Hill Road and other major and minor routes in Teton County (due to increase traffic) and potential habitat degradation and/or barriers to wildlife crossing of transportation corridors.

2. County Emergency Services:

- Increased needs for Teton County emergency services including visits to our community hospital, calls for ambulance/fire, Search and Rescue efforts and increased services from our County Sheriff's office.

3. County Transfer Station/Waste Management:

- Increased waste (construction, household, hotel/food service, recycling, hazardous waste) coming into the Teton County Transfer Station during construction and as a result of higher visitation, overnight accommodations, food services, and the presence of year round residents.

4. Cost of Housing/Real Estate:

- As Teton County continues to grow, a major resort expansion at Grand Targhee could accelerate and exacerbate our current housing shortage by increasing real estate prices and short-term rentals. This has the potential of displacing our public, private, and nonprofit workforce while also creating longer commute times and associated traffic impacts.

4. Impact on Construction-related Resources:

- Demand for lumber, gravel, steel, concrete, etc. will increase and likely have to come from sources out of the area. This could create local or regional shortages and/or long haul distances and related impacts on the environment.

5. Water quality and quantity:

- Local sources of drinking water for residents of Teton Valley located in Alta and Teton Canyon could be negatively impacted by runoff from construction in the proposed expansion area.
- Wastewater treatment facilities at the resort may not be adequate to appropriately treat additional wastewater and ensure the Teton River watershed is not negatively impacted.
- Increased water usage could also impact water availability and aquifer recharge in the Teton River watershed.

6. Recreation and Wildlife in Teton Canyon:

- Teton Canyon receives a high level of year round recreational use. The proposed expansion will likely increase recreational use in Teton Canyon and the resulting impacts on wildlife and natural resources could be significant.
- Expanding the ski area boundary into the “South Bowl” area may necessitate limiting use of public lands by the general public, essentially privatizing what is currently a public resource.

7. Air, Noise, Light pollution:

- We respectfully request that all forms of pollution be analyzed and mitigated as part of this EIS process including air, noise, and light pollution. This is a concern for our community’s health, safety, and quality of life.

As Grand Targhee works on implementing current and future plans, how will Teton County, Idaho fund necessary infrastructure improvements to keep up with the proposed expansion at the resort? Since we are in Idaho and the resort is in Wyoming, we do not receive the benefits of property tax, sales tax, real estate transfer tax, impact fees, inclusionary zoning fees or other sources of revenue associated with the private development at the base. Because recent improvements (i.e. new lifts, mountain bike trails, and facility upgrades) have been gradual and appropriately scaled, Teton County has not experienced any major issues. However, we are concerned that the proposed resort expansion beyond the existing boundary is a strategy to accelerate development and the sale of real estate with no plan to mitigate the impacts on Teton County's infrastructure, services, environment or people.

We would like to point out that Teton County, Idaho has a Transportation Plan (2019), Comprehensive Plan (2012), Economic Development Plan (2013), and Recreation and Public Access Master Plan (2014). We are currently working on our Capital Improvement Plan. All of these plans are used to guide the growth of our community and allocation of limited resources. We respectfully request that these plans are consulted as part of the EIS process so that our community’s priorities and limiting factors are considered during the analysis.

Impacts of any resort expansion will directly and indirectly affect county infrastructure, services, development trends, natural resources, and the people who live in Teton County, Idaho. We look forward to working with you to provide additional information and guidance in the EIS process.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia J. Riegel".

Cindy Riegel
Board Chair
Teton County Board of Commissioners