



Wyoming Wilderness Association

P.O. Box 6588 (Mailing)
44 S. Main (Physical)
Sheridan, WY 82801
(307) 672-2751

March 24, 2022

David Wilkinson, Project Contact (david.l.wilkinson@usda.gov)
Bridger-Teton National Forest – Jackson Ranger District
P.O. Box 1689
Jackson, WY 83001

Cc: Linda Merigliano, North Zone Recreation and Wilderness Program Manager
(linda.merigliano@usda.gov)
Timothy Farris, Trails and Wilderness Specialist (timothy.farris@usda.gov)

Re: Jackson Area Trailheads and Trails Projects
(Submitted online at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61456>)

Dear Mr. Wilkinson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Jackson Area Trailheads and Trails Project. Please accept this letter on behalf of the Wyoming Wilderness Association (WWA), a statewide nonprofit organization with a mission to protect Wyoming's Wilderness and public wildlands through advocacy, education, and stewardship. Our organization represents the interests of nearly 3,000 conservation, recreation, and outdoor enthusiasts from across Wyoming and the United States, who value the wilderness characteristics of places such as the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

WWA understands ensuring public safety, mitigating resource damage, and enhancing Wild and Scenic River values are the driving motivations behind the proposed re-designs of Mosquito Creek, Granite Creek, and Dog Creek trailheads. We appreciate the proactive management of this project in protecting our natural resources and valuable watersheds, including identifying and decommissioning user-created trails and illegal roads. Since this project will directly impact public access into the Gros Ventre Wilderness, Palisades, and Shoal Creek Wilderness Study Areas (WSA), we request that potential impacts to wilderness character be analyzed and disclosed as part of the public comment process.

As all three drainages have trailheads leading into federally protected wildlands, the proposed parking lot improvements have the potential to impact wilderness characteristics through a prohibited increase in motorized over-snow vehicle travel within the WSA boundaries¹ and an overall degradation in opportunities for solitude², especially within the Gros Ventre Wilderness.

¹ Public Law 98-550, Sec. 301. (c)(4)

² Public Law 98-550, Sec. 102. (b)(1)

To mitigate these adverse effects, WWA supports the limited parking lot footprints as outlined in the scoping documents in addition to increasing Wilderness and WSA boundary signage within each drainage. We would further suggest using the new kiosks as an educational opportunity to highlight the significance of wilderness, including regulations and threats such as invasive species. The kiosks could also include a complimentary discussion regarding the cultural landscape with information and language crafted in collaboration with Tribes ancestrally connected to the area. To this end, WWA would be willing to partner on education, outreach, and monitoring solutions of potential changes in trailhead use. We look forward to future conversations.

WWA appreciates your consideration of our scoping comments and looks forward to engaging with the project as it progresses. Thank you again for your time and efforts on this matter concerning our public wildlands.

Respectfully,



Carlie Ideker
Bridger-Teton Community Organizer
Wyoming Wilderness Association
carlie@wildwyo.org
(307) 672-2751