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First name: Eric

Last name: Johnson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Re: Scoping process for GTR SUP implementation and 2 proposed SUP areas.

Date: 9-14-2020

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the implementation of GTR MDP under the current SUP, as well as two proposed SUP adjustment areas. As there are many aspects to this proposed development, I will restrict my initial comments per CTNF EIS upon identified needs. Needs specified as below:

- * Provide additional undeveloped, minimally maintained lift-served terrain and additional traditionally cleared alpine trails to enhance terrain variety and advanced skiing experiences at GTR;
- * Provide an appropriate learning progression in an uncongested beginner area and increase the quantity of beginner, intermediate, and advanced-intermediate skiing terrain to enhance the skiing experience for beginner and intermediate skiers;
- * Improve the efficiency of the lift and trail network and skier circulation across the mountain by providing more reliable and consistent snowmaking coverage in key areas;
- * Update and improve facilities and guest services in the base area and on the mountain to meet the changing expectations of the local, regional, and destination skier markets; and
- * Expand alternative snow-based and non-winter activities to provide a variety of year-round recreational options to guests and to more effectively utilize existing infrastructure during non-winter months.

From a wide-angle perspective, these five goals could be applied to any ski area wishing to expand and the devil is in the details. I personally don't have a challenge with the last four, but the first need to "provide additional undeveloped...skiing experiences at GTR" is concerning. GTR is already well-known for its "off-trail" experience and still has substantial acreage within the current resort boundaries to allow for such a need to be met. The addition of proposed "north boundary" and "peaked" lifts appears reasonable, is within current boundaries and appears to be meet the stated need.

The proposed two additional areas to the SUP (South Bowl and Mono Trees) need a great deal of assessment and study before approval. This would require logging, impact a wide variety of existing wildlife, and certainly impact the Teton Canyon area as well as the South Bowl area bumps up against the Wilderness Area. I agree that a thorough and thoughtful EIS needs to be completed especially of these areas.

Regarding other aspects of the proposal:

No issues with lifts, lift replacements and realignments except for Palmer Platter lights proposed. In general and given the public's increasing wish for "dark skies," I would certainly have to be convinced that NO lights from Targhee could be observed from the valley floor.

No major issues with terrain and on-mountain infrastructure.

No issues with roads, except for the expansion as noted in the South Bowl and Mono Trees area.

No issues with snowmaking except for a general concern with the overall water requirements necessary for this expansion.

No issues with restaurants, yurt, on-mountain cabin, but again will oppose at this point any consideration of South Bowl facilities until EIS is completed and this thoughtfully reviewed.

No issues with summer recreation trails.

No issues with summer activities. It is important given the challenges of ski resort economics that summer activities be developed and promoted (within ski area boundaries).

No issues with alternative winter activities. As Nordic, fat-tire biking and snowshoeing increase in popularity, these activities should be promoted and developed within the current ski boundaries. Again, my concern is with the lighting of snow tubing facility and comments as noted above. "Dark skies" philosophy should prevail for the surrounding area below.

Depending on your definition of EIS, broader issues than impacts to the forest/alpine ecosystem exist. These include:

Given that the result of this proposal is increased usage by the public, all aspects of this increase in population use needs to be taken into consideration by all parties involved (Forest Service, local county and city government, State roads department, airport board, etc.)

Concerns over water source, usage, treatment and re-cycling.

Power grid issues and use.

Waste management to include human as well as food, garbage and the like.

Road concerns and maintenance.

As GTR lives within Teton County Wyoming, significant impacts will occur to Teton County Idaho such as taxing issues (tax revenue goes to Wyoming), maintenance of roads, waste issues, housing challenges for the workers, and the list goes on and on. Special concern is with increased number of GTR users, impact to local EMS/Fire/Police, hospital needs to be examined.

Impact of expansion on the "quality" of life to the geographic area affected.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to express some initial thoughts. I look forward to reviewing updates in this process.