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Organization:

Title:

Comments: TO:Mel Bolling

Caribou-Targhee National Forest

RE:Grand Targhee Master Development Plan

While we supported Geordie Gillett and the expansion plan that was approved for Grand Targhee in 2011, we have strong concerns about the impact this newly proposed Master Development plan for the expansion of Targhee will have on our wilderness, water, traffic and pollution.

We feel strongly that the proposed South Bowl and Mono Trees plans will have the most negative consequences. Three new lifts in the South Bowl area will come with the cost of loss of habitat for several species that migrate and live in this area.

We have a unique herd of Big Horn Sheep and they depend on the important mineral lick found in Teton Canyon. The new lifts and biking trails are close to the area where these sheep reside. Moose and elk live all around this area and in Teton Canyon. They will be disturbed by not only the added the mountain bikers and skiers but by the noise pollution from the Cat skiing and construction while the lifts are being built and by mountain maintenance and utility vehicle traffic when completed.

It is our understanding that the Mono Trees project will add a new lift that will require expansion into the Cold Springs gully area requiring an additional 600 adjacent acres.

Both of these projects will require removing canopy cover which is very important to the endangered Lynx that also live in this area. Additionally, other species that reside in these area will be adversely affected; in addition to moose and elk, bears, cougars, an occasional wolverine and birds call this area home.

There are also safety concerns to be considered in the South Bowl area. The south bowl slope is a known avalanche area and if developed, will increase the need for avalanche control which will adversely affect wildlife.

Water to the residents in Alta could be greatly affected not only by possible diversion of water from springs that provide water to the Alta Culinary water system (affecting water volume) but by contamination that could come from construction of new ski and bike trails and the operation of the resort and its added residences and structures. Water in Alta has already been affected by some the bike trails that have been added on the north side of Teton Canyon ridges.

Traffic is a huge concern. One lane up and one lane down. We already have people speeding on this road. Negative impact to our wildlife and increased traffic on a road that is used by cyclists and pedestrians - it is never a good combination.

There are several types of "pollution" that will be experienced if this project is allowed to proceed as presented. This is the quiet side of the Tetons. Construction of lifts and buildings will require heavy equipment, trucks and likely helicopters. This will affect not only the residents living in Alta and Driggs but also the wildlife living in and around the area. Once completed, we will be dealing with noise from additional Cat skiing, snowmobiles, avalanche control, maintenance vehicles etc.

Light pollution from restaurants atop the Dreamcatcher and Peak lifts will definitely have an affect on the "Dark Sky" vision we all share in this area.

These are some of the main concerns we have with this new proposed expansion project at Targhee. There are more...

Parking at the resort

Workforce housing

Not one but two mountain top restaurants

Quality of life for local residents in Alta and surrounding valley

We ask that the Forest Service take into consideration the points we and many others are raising about the scope of this project. We hope you will demand a complete EIS study (perhaps independent of the Master Development planners) addressing these concerns.

We ask that you weigh whether this massive expansion is truly needed vs the volume of the impact it will have on our wildlife and wilderness areas. It is significant.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathy and Tom Hoffman  
Alta, Wyoming