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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Mel Bolling, Superintendent of the Caribou-Targhee NF, and Jay Pence, District Ranger, Teton Basin Ranger District

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Grand Targhee's expansion plan. I appreciate Geordie and Targhee's openness to feedback.

Grand Targhee is a huge asset to our Teton Valley community, both summer and winter.

In the summer, their bike trails are second to none. I applaud Geordie and Andy's vision, and approve of their plans to expand the system and especially to connect it to the Teton Creek corridor. New multi-use, hiking, and downhill trails will benefit the user experience, as long as they are within the current use boundaries. I agree that warming huts in Rick's Basin and Lightning Ridge would be useful and appropriate. Structures on top of Dreamcatcher and Sacajawea lifts would be welcome additions to infrastructure, but as a Driggs resident, I would request that the lighting be in line with dark skies regulations, not adding to light pollution in our valley. I wholeheartedly support expansion of ski trails and services in bounds and in the beginner areas around Shoshone.

I am less whole-hearted in my support of winter expansion, however, due to two large areas of concern. #1- Teton Canyon's south-facing slopes are currently closed to human incursion in the winter due to crucial winter habitat needs for wildlife. Adding another lift or three to the south side of Peaked and codifying skier traffic down into Teton Canyon would disturb this critical habitat. This would NOT be acceptable or legal, in light of Wyoming Game and Fish winter closures. In addition, lifts and infrastructure will be highly visible from and immediately adjacent to Wilderness areas, negatively impacting users experiences there.

Socio-economic impacts from a large expansion at Grand Targhee will continue to be felt by Teton Valley Idaho. Affordable housing is already an issue, and as I understand it Targhee is already struggling with staffing issues. It is vital that any expansion request be required to deal with these impacts.

Finally, I am concerned about traffic and parking at Targhee. Unless they have a plan to accommodate more vehicles somehow, expansion seems futile. Is increased shuttle capacity a viable plan in a pandemic? A parking garage?

Thanks for taking my comments