

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/16/2020 4:19:39 AM

First name: Paige

Last name: Collins

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for opening up this issue for public comments. I appreciate that you have a tough job listening to everyone and trying to figure out how to balance everyone's needs.

I am a resident of Alta, WY. I have concerns about the proposed expansion to GTR. In addition to the critical habitat for bighorn sheep, grizzly bears, and other wildlife, I am greatly concerned about the negative effect this will have on the community.

The proposed expansion is going to increase visitors to the area, with increased traffic and impacts on our local resources. We already have a problem with affordable housing for locals. The demographic of people who are likely to be drawn into the area as a result of the proposed expansion will increase the number of short term rentals, while decreasing long-term rental inventory for locals, as well as drive up the cost of homes in the area. This is not a wealthy area and displacing the local population will likely be an unfortunate unintended consequence of the expansion.

Additionally, the number of cars going up to the ski resort on Ski Hill Road in the winter is quite substantial. An increased expansion of the proposed size would more than double the automobile traffic - increasing pollution and noise, decreasing safety (people already drive too fast on this road; more speeding drivers will make it even less safe), and disrupting the current small town feel we all love and were drawn to when choosing to live here. Pedestrians and bikers also need to be considered, as biking up to Targhee and walking along the road are popular recreation options for local residents (there is no alternate non-motorized path up to Targhee) and increased road traffic will make this even less safe for walkers, runners, and bikers. It will create traffic and parking problems in town - which the town infrastructure is not equipped to handle - as well as parking and traffic problems up at the resort, which already has a parking problem now.

The proposed buildings to be added to the resort will disturb our dark night skies and undeveloped mountain vistas. We now have an incredible opportunity for viewing the night sky, but the light pollution that will be emitted by the resort, night skiing, the proposed new housing units at the ski area, and the restaurants at the top of chair lifts will have a negative impact on this. The increased development will unfortunately seriously reduce the natural beauty of the area for all local residents.

A major aim of our public lands is to give everyone a chance to access and visit them - to have the opportunity to experience nature in its inherent splendor and participate in outdoor activities. A ski resort on Forest Service land does not meet those needs; in fact it detracts from them. Visiting a ski resort is expensive and it drastically reduces the number of people who can afford to go. The proposed expansion will reduce the backcountry area for people who access the backcountry on their own power - alpine skiers, snowboarders, and snowshoers who appreciate hiking into areas to exercise and recreate in peaceful solitude, uninterrupted by the noise and activity of a busy ski resort. It will also cut into the ability of nordic skiers to ski the trail system in Teton Canyon which is a much loved nordic destination.

I am a skier and I enjoy skiing at GTR. I appreciate having this ski mountain here. I am excited for the expansion to Peaked Mountain and the addition of a fifth chairlift. However, I also very much appreciate that Grand Targhee is not an overdeveloped, high-end ski resort which draws in the wealthy. I like that the ski area is part of a community and is accessible to those who call this community home. I think it is wise to develop what has already been approved, and improve upon the existing buildings and structures at the base, and then see how that impacts the traffic, parking, and the community before considering doing anything more.

We can all see what has happened to Jackson due to increased visitation, development, and traffic and it's not a desirable change we want in this community. The stress on the housing market in Jackson is out of control, and many people have left Jackson and moved over to Teton Valley, Idaho because they couldn't afford to live over there anymore and they were attracted to a quieter, simpler way of life over here. The stress of high numbers of visitors on the natural resources over near Jackson has made it so that visiting these areas no longer feels like you are visiting the wilderness, and access to quiet places in nature is hard to find. Allowing a large expansion of Grand Targhee could have similar impacts over here. Please consider only minimal expansion of GTR and preserve what makes the east side of the Tetons so special. Thank you.