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First name: Will
Last name: Mook
Organization: AMPL
Title: Executive Director
Comments: Jackson Area Trailheads and Trails Project
Public Comment
Advocates for Multi-use of Public Lands
will@teamampl.org
(307) 699-3038

Dear Bridger Teton National Forest,

First, thank you for considering our public comment and taking on projects to improve access to public lands. At AMPL, we support projects that create better access for all users, and we are committed to working with government agencies to achieve this goal.

Per the scoping document:

Granite Creek Falls Area:

AMPL is in full support of the improvements listed in this area. We think it is appropriate to re-route the trail around the hot springs area to minimize conflict and congestion. We also support reclaiming the user created paths to the falls and creating one, more robust trail for those hiking down to the falls. Improved and well-signed parking is also a great idea for minimizing disturbance in this area, as well as minimizing erosion caused by the existing parking area.

Granite Creek Wintertime Trailhead:

At the wintertime trailhead, we would suggest a different location and design than those proposed in the scoping documents. The scoping document cites congestion at the pool area as the major reason for not expanding the parking area. The Granite Creek drainage sees more use than just riding to the hot springs and back. This area offers phenomenal backcountry snowmobiling, skiing, fat biking, and Nordic skiing and many people recreate in areas other than Granite Hot Springs. There are also several residents who use that same trailhead to access their private homes in the wintertime and leave their vehicles overnight, for many days in the public parking area. With the various types of increased use in this area, re-designing the plans to accommodate a little more parking, or at least relocating the overnight parking for residents would greatly benefit the public.

Dog Creek

We support the improvements suggested to the Dog Creek parking area and the trail reroute to avoid conflict with the outfitter in that area. This seems like a simple fix to provide clear parking for the public, as well as a defined route bypassing the outfitter camp.

Mosquito Creek

We support the closure of the two user-created trails outlined in the scoping document. We also support connecting the Adams Canyon and Marshall Creek trails and making them one-directional to improve the user experience and create safer travel. We do feel, however, the proposed parking plan needs to be re-visited.

Parking at Mosquito Creek is currently very limited and the road to access the parking area is in poor condition. We agree that the parking area needs improvement including a new bed surface and clearer parking spots. Use in Mosquito Creek has grown significantly in the past 10 years. We feel strongly that the road and parking area should be improved to allow trailer access. Limiting the trailhead to sled decks discriminates against those who don't have trucks to haul their snowmobiles, as well as those traveling from out of town. It also discourages

carpooling and in turn, many folks drive individually, taking up unnecessary parking.

At AMPL, we firmly believe our federal lands belong to all users equally, not just locals who use the trailheads the most. Many folks traveling from out of town to the Bridger Teton National Forest don't do so with sled decks, but transport their snowmobiles with trailers. This user group should not be excluded from accessing Mosquito Creek. We propose a reworking of the trailhead area to include a trailer turnaround and at least a couple places to park trailers. This would also allow Wyoming State Trails to transport a groomer to Mosquito Creek, which they have not been able to do this season due to the poor accessibility to the trailhead.

Improving the parking lot would benefit other user groups as well. In the winter, many people walk the hard-packed trail, and if grooming were to occur, Nordic skiers could enjoy this access. In the summer, an expanded and improved parking area would allow people with horse trailers, dirt bikes, and ATVs a safe, easy place to park. In addition to expanding the parking lot, the Mosquito Creek Road itself needs improvement. The road surface is in poor condition and is very narrow in some places. This project should include a road resurfacing and slight widening (even just brushing the shoulders) in places where it is narrow to make it safer for all users accessing this increasingly popular trailhead.

Mosquito Creek is a popular access point to the Palisades, but between the poor condition of the road and the extremely limited parking lot, AMPL feels improvements need to be made to better serve the public. We would love to be involved in further conversations about how we can improve access to all of the discussed trailheads, while also preserving the landscape and natural resources this special place has to offer. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or opportunities for further conversation.

Will Mook
Executive Director
AMPL