

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/13/2025 12:41:47 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Subject: Opposition to South Expansion of Grand Targhee Ski Resort

Dear Forest Supervisor,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed south expansion of the Grand Targhee Ski Resort in the Caribou-Targhee National Forest. This expansion poses significant threats to the local environment, public safety, and the fiscal stability of Teton County, Idaho. Below, I outline my concerns regarding the detrimental effects on wildlife, safety issues related to road access, and the increased burden on county services.

Derogatory Effect on Wildlife: The expansion would encroach upon critical habitats for numerous species, including elk, mule deer, and the threatened Canada lynx. Most recently the wolverine was placed on the threatened list and as recent as 3 years ago one was captured on a trail camera in that very area. The increased human activity, noise, and habitat fragmentation would disrupt migration patterns and breeding grounds, potentially leading to population declines. The Environmental Impact Statement must thoroughly evaluate these risks to ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act and the National Forest Management Act.

Safety Concerns with Road Access (Idaho State Highway 33): The expansion would significantly increase traffic on Idaho State Highway 33, a two-lane road already prone to hazardous winter conditions. The influx of visitors could overwhelm the road's capacity, increasing the risk of accidents and complicating emergency response times. The Idaho Department of Transportation has not proposed adequate upgrades to mitigate these safety concerns, which must be addressed before any expansion is approved.

Increased Burden on County Services: The expansion would place a substantial strain on Teton County's public services, including police, fire, and hospital resources. The county's current infrastructure is not equipped to handle the anticipated population and visitor growth. Additional costs for staffing, equipment, and facilities would likely fall on local taxpayers, as the resort's economic benefits are not guaranteed to offset these expenses. A comprehensive fiscal impact analysis is essential to evaluate the true cost to the community.

In light of these concerns, I urge the Forest Service to deny the south expansion proposal for Grand Targhee Ski Resort. The potential harm to wildlife, public safety risks, and financial burden on Teton County outweigh any short-term economic gains. I request that the Forest Service prioritize the long-term health of the ecosystem and the well-being of the community in its decision-making process.

Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to the opportunity to participate in the public review process and request notification of any upcoming hearings or comment periods.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Jensen