

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/6/2025 4:32:57 AM

First name: LeeAnn

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS,

Thank you for allowing public comment submission for the proposed expansion of Targhee ski Resort in Alta, Wyoming.

I oppose any and all expansion, including upgrades to permitted areas, at Targhee Ski Resort. I support option 1, which is no expansion into the Mono Trees, no upgrades or additions to current operations, and no expansion into the South Bowl area.

I have been skiing Targhee since I was 5 years old, so continuously for the past 50 years. Targhee is a fine resort with good terrain, adequate facilities and a sustainable use plan. I hike and backpack often in the adjoining USFS land and the Jedidiah Smith Wilderness area and enjoy the wildlife of the area. I am very familiar with the proposed expansion area and oppose any expansion and upgrades to facilities on USFS land. No expansion of the boundaries of the permitted area is necessary and only erodes at the very character which makes Targhee sustainable and special and a fine, small ski resort.

I am an avid hiker and have spent many happy trips in the Teton Range. The viewshed and preservation of pristine mountain environment must be maintained. The developed area is already an eyesore, an expansion of the resort and upgrades to existing facilities, will cause permanent scars and unsightly views. The integrity of the views of the neighboring Wilderness Areas and Grand Teton National Park must be maintained.

Expanding the resort will have permanent detrimental affects to the Whitebark Pines and the alpine vegetation. Whitebark Pines are a threatened species and any and all trees which bear cones or are surviving the onslaught of Pine Beetles, drought and blister rust, must be protected and any disturbance prevented. Alpine vegetation is very fragile and easily lost with the slightest disturbance.

Expansion of Targhee would be detrimental to many species of wildlife including Bighorn Sheep, all ungulate species, grizzly and black bears and even wolves. The impact to many of the lesser known species (songbirds, owls, hawks, falcons, furbearing mammals) will also be substantial as any tree removal, roads, trails and construction of lifts and infrastructure will decrease the habitat for all of our animals, from songbirds to bighorn sheep and everything in between. Vital winter habitat will be affected and that is when ungulates are at their most vulnerable.

The socio-economic impacts to the Teton Valley and surrounding area must be considered. Traffic, construction impacts, resort impacts, sewer, wildland fire, water and social structure must all be considered. This proposed expansion will have far reaching impacts on the communities of Teton Valley which are already experiencing extreme pressures due to growth. It is not simple, it is a very complex issue and must have all angles studied.

I live in Jackson and every single day I see the impacts that a ski resort without strict guidelines has. The community suffers with traffic issues, affordable housing options and job related stress. The recreational access is limited and certainly not free. The scenic values have been affected as JHMR is a permanent construction zone with an aerial tram and a new pedestrian walkway which sky lines the landscape. Wildlife and especially wintering wildlife suffer due to activity, roads, noise and lights. Whitebark Pines no longer thrive within the resort boundaries and the alpine vegetation is subject to continual construction and relentless foot traffic. Do not allow this same fate to happen at Targhee!

Expansion into Mono Trees and South Bowl is essentially privatizing public lands and violates the Forest Service mandate of allowing multiple uses on public lands. This public land will become a construction zone and a business zone and not for the public for free access. Why allow a successful business to increase their revenues on OUR public lands. This land is for all of us and there is no need for them to expand beyond their current permitted area.

In conclusion, there is not any reason to allow an expansion of Targhee. I oppose any and all expansion of Targhee. Option 1 is the only option which will protect scenic values, open space, and wilderness values. Option 1 is the only option which protects recreation values and protects wildlife, their habitat and wildlife movement. The community impacts on Teton County, Idaho have not been addressed or considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Lee Ann Inberg-Schuff