

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/19/2025 6:54:03 PM

First name: Hanna

Last name: Palmer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Supervisor Pierson,

I am writing today to share my concerns over the proposed Grand Targhee Resort expansion. After reviewing the draft Environmental Impact Statement regarding the Grand Targhee 2018 Master Development Plan Projects released by the Forest Service, I believe that it is in the best interest of both Teton County, Idaho and Teton County, Wyoming to only consider Alternative 1 or a heavily modified Alternative 3.

The proposal for this project was put forward to address an increased need for outdoor recreation and for the Grand Targhee Resort to remain competitive with other mountain resorts. But is this "need" grounded in facts or is it actually a "want"? Furthermore, is this need so dire that the community should sacrifice public lands to a private industry? Currently, the Grand Targhee Resort offers 2,602 acres of terrain for the enjoyment of its 250,000 annual skiers. In comparison, one of its competitive partners-the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort-only offers 2,500 acres of skiable terrain while hosting nearly 710,000 annual skiers. With fewer yearly visitors and more available land, there is no obvious reason why the area currently allocated under the Special Use Permit is not sufficient to host Grand Targhee Resort's clientele.

Beyond the lack of obvious need for this project, the draft contains many oversights in regard to the disproportionate socioeconomic impacts that will affect Teton County, Idaho. Teton County is one of the fastest-growing counties in Idaho; however, this growth has come with a cost. Community resources such as housing availability, healthcare access, emergency services, and schools are already overextended in order to accommodate these changes. As seen within the ECONorthwest socioeconomic study, Teton County, ID would face even more costs if the expansion is approved as it is unlikely that the community will be able to capture revenue from the resort and would additionally have to shoulder the burden of increased infrastructure requirements. The draft Environmental Impact Statement fails to thoroughly explore the consequences this development would have on community services nor does it pose possible mitigations.

I urge the Forest Service to not only consider the socioeconomic impacts of this project but also the inherent worth of nature and our duty to protect it. As the final stretch of the Yellowstone to Yukon wildlife corridor, the ecosystem services that Teton Valley provides extend well beyond the border of our county. To see this critical habitat be developed under private ownership, encroaching on the Jedediah Smith Wilderness in direct opposition of the Wilderness Act of 1964, would be a travesty. The Mono Trees and South Bowl areas projected for development contain habitat that is necessary to sustain our grizzly bear, lynx, wolverine, and bighorn sheep populations; to approve this expansion would mean to jeopardize iconic wildlife and further fragment essential migration corridors.

In all, the action plans proposed by Alternatives 2, 4, and 5 only serve the interests of the elite few while disregarding the wellbeing of the Teton Valley community and the surrounding natural area. I would support pursuing Alternative 1 or a modified Alternative 3 to ensure that there is no development within the Mono Trees or South Bowl areas, thus protecting our public lands for future generations and ensuring greater economic stability for Teton County.

Respectfully,
Hanna Palmer