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Organization:

Title:

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To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept my response to the DEIS in regards to Grand Targhee expansion. I have lived in Teton Valley, Idaho since August, 2006, and have been a season pass holder at Grand Targhee each season since that time. I am in favor of adopting Alternative 3, with no expansion beyond current ski area boundaries, and a small restaurant at the top of the Sacajewea lift.

There is no reason for Targhee to increase skier acreage, as crowds and lift lines are virtually non-existent. Since the new Colter lift, which I am strongly supportive of, there are no lift lines, even on the busiest weekend powder days. Targhee already boasts more skier acres than Jackson Hole Mountain resort, but has a fraction of use species. Expansion into the South Bowl and Mono Trees area will result in a severe impact to wildlife. The South Bowl is important Big Horn Sheep habitat. The National Park Service, Wyoming Game and Fish, and the Teton Sheep Working Group have spent years convincing backcountry skiers to avoid sensitive Bighorn habitat, yet the proposal considers developed recreation and avalanche mitigation activities within and adjacent to this area. The proposed plan cites the need to cut 450 Whitebark Pine trees. This is unacceptable, as it is endangered in the Northern Rockies, and certainly not to develop poor ski terrain with limited vertical drop.

Much of the cost of expansion would be borne by residents of Teton Valley, and the town of Driggs in particular. This includes road use, traffic congestion, and an increased bus line supported that is paid for by Valley taxpayers- not Grand Targhee. Expansion would also require more workers, who would require affordable housing in an already tight market. The outside the boundaries expansion requested by the resort would change the low-key, local nature of the ski hill. I have talked with tourists, and have friends come to ski from other resorts, and unanimously, it is the local, laid-back vibe, along with consistent good snow that has brought them here.

In terms of in-bounds expansion, I would support a small café/warming hut on top of Sacajewea. I think that would add to the resort, and do much to keep traffic out of the base area. Bridger Bowl put in an upper mountain restaurant approximately ten years ago, and it definitely added to the charm of the resort. Conversely, I'm adamantly opposed to any building on top of Fred's. This would not only be seen from The Valley, but also within The Jedidiah Smith Wilderness and Grand Teton National Park.

Sincerely,

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