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First name: Patrick

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Supervisor Pierson,

I am first and foremost opposed to the expanding of Grand Targhee's Special Use Permit to include new terrain in the Caribou/Targhee National Forest. The expansion of the ski resort into the "South Bowl" and "Mono" trees areas are not necessary for the economic vitality of the ski area. The hard data on skiable acres in relation to visitation is nowhere close to what Jackson Hole Mountain Resort has on the other side of the range. There is plenty of room at the ski area to support many more visitors with its current footprint. This data clearly exhibits that Grand Targhee Mountain Resort (GTMR) does not have a quantifiable purpose and need for expansion. Boundary expansion would negatively impact the already compromised local Teton bighorn sheep population, as well as crucial healthy whitebark pines that are officially listed as a threatened species. Beyond effecting the direct footprint of the boundary expansion itself, the impact of increased use in Teton canyon adjacent to the ski area would be felt immensely with the advent of backcountry gates allowing multitudes of people access to areas that have historically seen very light use. The ripple effect of such a proposal is greatly underestimated.

Please, do not expand the Special Use Permit for GTMR.

The second point of contention that exists with me with Grand Targhee's Master Plan is the proposed restaurant/lodge that would be on top of Fred's Mountain. The restaurant/lodge is an unnecessary addition creating an unsightly intrusion in an otherwise untarnished view shed. The impact during the day would be bad enough, but for someone who lives in Teton Valley, or worse, are backcountry camping in the Jedediah Smith Wilderness, or Grand Teton National Park at night; the effect of a large source of artificial light emanating from a mountain top would be a serious detriment. The other major issue with the restaurant/lodge is the problem of water, and of wastewater that would be generated. There is no legitimate data on this in the EIS, and I find that that this is a major issue that has not been addressed.

Please, no restaurant/lodge on top of Fred's Mountain

The third point of contention that concerns me is the impact an expansion could have on Teton Valley Idaho. It's my understanding that there have been third party analysis that have concluded that Teton Valley Idaho would shoulder the cost of long term maintenance on county infrastructure, including roads, emergency, and medical services, while receiving zero tax revenue from the ski area. Idaho by law, unfortunately does not have a resort tax like many other mountain towns in other states. The increased tax revenue that would need to be generated for the upkeep of infrastructure, and essential services would come from property taxes of local citizens, with no financial input from the folks visiting. Meanwhile the State of Wyoming, and Teton County Wyoming reap all of the economic benefits.

Please do not allow GTMR to expand, it is economically, and socially detrimental to Teton Valley Idaho.

I am supportive of the lift upgrades proposed within the current Special Use Permit area.

The decisions we make today will effect generations. We have the utmost responsibility to create a legacy that our grandchildren's children can look upon with respect and thanks. Let's preserve what we can, while we can. There can be sustainability in the ski industry, we don't have to constantly grow and expand to make things better.

Thank you for you time, and for allowing me to submit my comments and ideas.

Respectfully Yours,

Patrick Grace