

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/20/2025 1:12:19 PM

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Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Grand Targhee 2018 Master Development Plan Projects draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). I am opposed to Grand Targhee Resort (GTR) expanding beyond its current boundaries. I support Grand Targhee ski resort's growth and development, but not at the expense of its surrounding wildlands.

My family lives in the Driggs area and I feel that any expansion outside of the current boundary would be detrimental to the natural resources, wildlife and water resources in the area. It would also increase the amount of strain that is already put on the emergency services, roadways and infrastructure of Teton County, Idaho. We have spent many family outings in Teton Canyon and the surrounding areas. These areas need to be preserved for future generations.

The DEIS analyzes a broad range of alternatives, including Alternative 3 that would authorize new development within Targhee's existing footprint, while not permitting the resort to expand. I see Alternative 3, with modifications, as a win-win for all interests. It allows the ski area to update its facilities and expand its lift-served terrain and offerings, while continuing to protect adjacent public lands that are important for wildlife and dispersed recreation.

Here are reasons that I am opposed to any expansion at Grand Targhee Resort (Alternatives 2, 4, and 5):

- Direct and indirect habitat loss for wildlife
- Significant impacts to the many uses and users of Teton Canyon, including backcountry skiers, Nordic skiers and snowshoers, as well as summer recreationists. These impacts in winter include visual and noise impacts, the potential for resort-triggered avalanches to harm backcountry travelers, and visual and noise impacts in the non-snow months.

I am also concerned about how the increased snowmaking and other proposed new water uses across all Alternatives will impact water resources. The DEIS fails to provide adequate information about where the water to support these activities will come from, if it is even truly available, or how wastewater will be treated and disposed of. This issue must be addressed in the FEIS. Likewise, I am concerned about the impact of placing a restaurant on the very top of Fred's Mountain will impact the adjacent Wilderness and views from Grand Teton National Park. If approved, this restaurant should be located below the ridgeline where it would not be visible from the Wilderness or Park. Likewise, the North Boundary lift would be visible from many points within the Wilderness and should be eliminated or modified to reduce this visual impact.

While both expansion pods would bring negative impacts to wildlife, the expansion into South Bowl strikes at the heart of a conservation challenge the backcountry community is a key stakeholder in. Alternatives 2 and 4 would convert important bighorn sheep habitat in South Bowl into a ski resort and indirectly eliminate adjacent critical habitat through the disturbance caused by avalanche mitigation. Meanwhile, the Caribou-Targhee National Forest and other land managers in the Teton region have asked the backcountry ski community to voluntarily avoid important sheep habitat, including a portion of South Bowl! The mere proposal of expanding into this area is hypocritical.

According to available user data, Grand Targhee's existing boundaries encompass 2,600 acres and services about 200,000 skiers annually. The Jackson Hole Mountain Resource operates on 2,500 acres of Forest Service land and services over 500,000 skiers annually. Grand Targhee has many opportunities within its boundary to grow and development. Expanding beyond its existing boundary is simply not needed.

As an Idahoan and a conservationist, I believe it is important that we find a balance between recreation and wildlife habitat needs in the Teton Region, and keeping Targhee within its current boundaries is the best way to accomplish this on the West side of the Tetons.