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First name: Jessica

Last name: Mann

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Supervisor Pierson,

I am writing to provide public comment on the Grand Targhee expansion draft EIS.

I fully appreciate that GTR has a need to stay viable, as it is a key part of Teton Valley. It provides much benefit in terms of employment, visitors, support of community organizations, and in no way do I want to suggest they are unwelcome neighbors. Many locals enjoy their skiing and other facilities all year long.

That said, I have grave concerns over the scope of expansion proposed. If the full development proposal were to occur, it would have documented irreversible negative impacts on wildlife, the environment, and Teton Valley. Construction would damage mountain ecosystems with negative impacts on Whitebark pines (a keystone species and nationally protected tree), and habitat for imperiled species like grizzly bears, lynx, Wolverines, bighorn sheep, and others. Increased noise from construction and snowmaking would disturb the wilderness just adjacent to GTR. The new runs and lifts and restaurants on the mountain would be visible from Teton Canyon, disturbing the experience for recreationists who come here for the solitude and wilderness feel. Once gone, it is gone forever.

The impacts to our way of life in the valley are similarly impacted forever. These include more traffic on Ski Hill and local roads, increasingly unaffordable housing, strain on our community service providers like EMS and medical. These negative impacts fall on us, the residents and public citizens of Teton County, ID. The positive benefits? Mostly to GTR and Teton County, WY. This is not a fair business proposition as it stands.

I strongly urge you to choose Alternative 1 or Alternative 3, with minor modifications such as no restaurant on the top of Fred's Mountain. When you consider the overall good and the future of wildlife, the environment, and the residents of Teton Valley, I believe the choice is clear. To allow such expansion with irreversible and negative impacts is unconscionable, and would become your legacy should you allow that happen. Please choose wisely to protect this special and invaluable place.

Sincerely,

-Jessica Mann