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First name: Elizabeth

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Supervisor Pierson,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIS for the proposed expansion of Grand Teton Resort. This project is of great interest to me for a variety of reasons. I have a direct view of the ski terrain from my house, though the base area is hidden from view. We treasure our view and the darkness of the night skies and mountains. I am the leader of a chapter of Great Old Broads for Wilderness, a national, grassroots environmental advocacy organization focused on the protection of public lands. Our chapter, called the WHALES of Teton Valley ID and WY, has over 650 members who are active skiers and hikers; we consider Teton Canyon our beloved backyard and the wildlife who inhabit it our neighbors. This letter represents my personal opinions, though I have the values of my members in mind, as well.

My first point is that no changes should be made to GTR until some sort of revenue-sharing agreement has been reached between Teton County, WY, Teton County, ID and the town of Driggs, ID. The resort is currently planning to add hundreds of dwelling and hotel units under an existing permit; the increase in visits from these projects coupled with the increase if the current expansion proposal is approved would severely impact the "downstream" communities in Idaho. Our roads, schools, housing and social and emergency services cannot support the increase in residents, visitors and staff caused by resort expansion, and state law restricts the ability of the municipalities to raise the revenue needed to offset these impacts.

I am strongly opposed to expansion of the existing SUP into Mono Trees and South Bowl. South Bowl is frequented by Big Horn Sheep and possibly Wolverine; Mono Trees has sensitive avian habitat. At a time when the sale of public lands is being seriously considered by Congress, I cannot support encroachment into additional public acreage in order to benefit a private individual. The nearby Jedediah Smith Wilderness (JSW) will be impacted by mechanized skiing in South Bowl due to road-building, avalanche mitigation and snowmaking. These activities will limit the solitude visitors can expect to experience in designated Wilderness. The presence of a ski lift in the South Bowl will simplify access to backcountry skiing in the Wilderness, and an increase in skier numbers will stress the wildlife in the area.

My preference is for Alternative 3, with some changes to proposals for facilities within the existing SUP area. I oppose the inclusion of mountaintop restaurants because of the visual intrusion on the horizon, the lights and glare that will be visible from Teton Valley and Grand Teton National Park. Grand Targhee's runs are not so long that skiers find it inconvenient to descend to the base area to visit a restaurant. In every direction I look there are no ridgeline structures, which is just one feature that makes this valley unique. I am also opposed to including gates along the northern boundary of the SUP for the same reasons I've given for opposing development of the South Bowl.

The owner of Grand Targhee Resort has not convinced me of the need to expand the boundaries of the SUP. Grand Targhee has half the number of annual visitors in a larger area than Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. Lift lines are short or nonexistent. The owner has stated his desire to turn Grand Targhee into a "world-class ski resort", but at what cost? The impacts of expansion would negatively change the nature of the community forever. I ask you to strongly weight the wishes of the community to preserve our small town from even less available housing, overburdened streets and services that cannot keep up with current demands, much less the increase that resort expansion will cause.

Thank you for considering my point of view.

Elizabeth McCane

Driggs, ID