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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Teton Valley Idaho is an attractive community to live and raise a family in. I bought a place here in 2020 because I fell in love with the character of the place and the people who live here.

I've noticed that Broulim's in Driggs is an interesting intersection between the folks who have made this community home, and the people who come to visit. The people who live here are usually patient, kind, gracious, and helpful. But I have more than once noticed folks who come for the recreation can be impatient, respond to encounters with a sense of entitlement, take the best parking, and are sometimes unreasonably competitive with locals for attention.

I bring this up, because we not only have world class hiking, fly-fishing, mountain biking, and skiing to offer folks, but a slower and more meaningful way of life. In Idaho, we count time by the half hour and our friendships by the capacities people have to care and do for one another. We count the beauty of the day by the laughter of our kids, a job well done, and a glance at the mountains. These things calibrate the significance and authenticity of our lives. Without them, we are less, and our lives are less.

I was sitting in my Subaru near the Ace Greenhouse after a day of pulling Thistle and Hounds Tongue. A young lady in an out of state black SUV pulled in several parking spaces off the street, and looked at her cell phone. She finished what she was doing and put her vehicle in reverse. At the same time an old truck pulled in off the street and scooted slowly past her. She honked at the guy though he had the right of way. He had to get off the street, and if he stopped, he'd still be behind her. So he slowly ambled by, and she honked even more aggressively because he didn't seem to acknowledge her. He looked at me and threw up both hands and just shook his head. Just a local guy on a Friday night getting a sandwich and a beer with his dog.

It illustrates a profound difference people have who visit here and those who live here. So does observation of city and highway speed limits, and weekday vs. weekend traffic. We need to really think through what it is we want to become. We can do things to change the character of the community to something we never would have wanted.

I believe the full-scale expansion of Grand Targhee is a possible tipping point to do just that.

We risk bringing so many people into the community who don't know how to share our values, we lose our identity and what makes this place so special to the onslaught of people who just want to either use it and leave, or develop it and use up what others have built over a lifetime to make a home.

I use the privacy and accessibility of Teton Canyon to make my way into the mountains often. Others do as well, for alpine camping, biking, cross country skiing, family get togethers, climbing, graduation parties, and end of year activities for schools. For some children, this is the first organized hike in the mountains they experience. I bring friends of mine here from Indiana as a first hike to help them acclimate to elevation and wilderness, so we can later go deeper and they will build skills. Neighbors and co-workers of mine, bring their own children here to camp on weekends for the same reasons. It's ideal for that. It's first-class wilderness and right outside of town.

Teton Canyon and the Mill Creek areas get used by more than just the people. These are just as popular with the animals. These areas are secure migratory areas for all kinds of critters that need that privacy in old growth areas not crawling with people to make a home for themselves as much as we have down in the valley. Expanding into these areas is a bad idea.

As we grow the community, we need to be thinking about how we want to live, and what we all want to live for. We need good homes for the people who live here, not just to service the rich and the folks who recreate here,

but jobs and opportunity to build lives keep jobs and professions. We will always attract people because of the mountains and the wildlife, but we need to grow in ways that protect it and augment the good connections we have that make our way of life-not ways that take it away. A modified Alternative 3 allows needed upgrades, but keeps the growth slower and in step with where we are trying to grow the community in other ways.