

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/24/2025 6:18:58 PM

First name: William

Last name: Baehr

Organization:

Title:

Comments: True public engagement requires accessibility for all and clear communication of forest rules both online and on the ground.

Public Comment Text:

The Bridger-Teton belongs to everyone, and that means public engagement must be accessible and inclusive. Too often, participation is limited to those who can attend in-person meetings or navigate online portals during short windows of time. If the Forest is serious about welcoming public input, it must provide multiple, accessible ways for people to contribute year-round.

I recommend that the Forest:

Offer regular online listening sessions so citizens who live far away or cannot attend in person still have a voice. Make sure digital platforms are mobile-friendly and easy to use, since many citizens rely on phones rather than computers.

Provide plain-language summaries of planning documents, so the public is not excluded by overly technical language.

Ensure forest usage rules are posted clearly at all entrance points and online, with QR codes at kiosks or signs that link directly to the most up-to-date regulations. This would make compliance easier, reduce conflicts, and increase understanding among visitors.

Expand outreach to seasonal workers, rural residents, Indigenous voices, and visitors, whose perspectives are often overlooked but vital.

As someone who has freely donated my service for eight years as a volunteer camping ambassador, I have seen firsthand how many people want to do the right thing but simply lack clear, accessible information. A system that makes rules easy to find and understand, both on-site and online, would strengthen stewardship and reduce misunderstandings.

Those who are paid to manage the Forest are servants of the public, not rulers, and they have a duty to ensure that every citizen can both understand the rules and participate in shaping the future of these lands. By committing to accessibility, inclusivity, and clarity in communication, the Bridger-Teton can better reflect the voices of the people it serves.