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First name: Amanda

Last name: Head

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I object to the proposed amendments to the 1997 Targhee National Forest Management Plan that would allow Grand Targhee to expand onto more National Forest land. I urge the Forest Service to reject these amendments and select Alternative 3 (No SUP Expansion).

As someone who has spent a lot of time skiing at Grand Targhee, I simply don't see the need for this expansion. Even on busy weekends, lift lines are usually short, and there is already plenty of terrain to enjoy. Expanding into South Bowl and other undeveloped areas feels more like a business decision than something that serves the public.

I'm also not convinced that South Bowl will provide the kind of skiing experience the FEIS suggests. The FEIS itself acknowledges that South Bowl is a south-facing slope, will require snow management, will be open fewer days than other parts of the mountain, and that climate change is expected to continue reducing snow quality over time.

From my own experience skiing South Bowl, I know how quickly conditions can change. I've had great powder on one run only to find the snow heavy and deteriorating just a few hours later. There are also many storm days when Grand Targhee can't even open Mary's Nipple or Colter's until later in the day because of avalanche control. If South Bowl faces similar delays, I question how often skiers will actually get the quality conditions being used to justify permanently developing one of the mountain's last wild areas.

The FEIS says favorable wind loading and elevation have "proven" South Bowl can hold good snow, but it doesn't provide enough analysis to support that conclusion. It also doesn't explain how many days the terrain is realistically expected to be open or how often visitors will experience the quality skiing being promised. Given that the FEIS acknowledges fewer operating days and declining snow conditions in the future, I don't believe it demonstrates that the long-term recreational benefits outweigh the permanent impacts of development.

I'm also concerned that the Forest Service is approving this expansion without clearly explaining how public access will change. The FEIS relies on a future Operations and Boundary Management Plan that hasn't even been developed yet. That means the public is being asked to accept this project without knowing how access to South Bowl, Noodle Ridge, and surrounding backcountry areas will be managed.

As someone who regularly recreates in this area, I want to know whether the routes people use today will remain open or whether access will be restricted once these lands are inside Grand Targhee's Special Use Permit boundary. If the resort will control access to adjacent public lands, those decisions should have been analyzed before this project was approved-not postponed to a future planning document. Without those details, it's impossible to fully understand how this expansion will affect public access to National Forest lands.

Beyond these concerns, I'm troubled by what we're giving up. These are public lands that belong to everyone, yet the proposal would permanently dedicate hundreds of acres to a private ski resort. Resort skiing has become too expensive for many local families, so it's hard to see how expanding a resort that fewer and fewer people can afford is really in the public's best interest.

The environmental impacts also concern me. Expanding into these undeveloped areas will reduce protections for wildlife habitat, fragment important landscapes, and put additional pressure on the surrounding ecosystem. On top of that, more resort development will bring increased traffic, more demand on local housing, and further

impacts on the character of this area.

Public lands should be managed for the benefit of everyone, with an emphasis on protecting wildlife, watersheds, and recreation opportunities that remain affordable and accessible. I don't believe this proposal meets that standard.

For these reasons, I respectfully object to the proposed Forest Plan amendments and ask the Forest Service to choose Alternative 3, the No SUP Expansion alternative.

Amanda Head
Driggs Resident