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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Some comments on the upcoming Grand Targhee Master Development Plan 58258:

Would you please specifically address the following issues in the EIS and related plan documents and decisions:

How development will be enacted in such a way that the iconic viewshed of the mountains from the Teton Valley will not be impacted, either by obtrusive unnatural structures visible from the valley during daylight hours or by visible lights at night.

How terrain currently used by human-powered backcountry skiers and snowboarders will be impacted, acknowledging that lift-served skiing and snowboarding user days are declining nationally and backcountry skiing and snowboarding is growing rapidly, according to published industry (SIA) reports. I don't feel that taking terrain away from public use is appropriate and want to be sure that there is no net loss of useable backcountry terrain in this Plan. By useable, I mean West through North through East facing terrain above 7,000 feet and between 10 and 40 degrees in steepness that is practical to approach without using a lift. Please also explain how self-powered recreationists will be impacted by an increase in the number of users accessing the backcountry via lifts.

The anticipated environmental and public safety impact of increasing traffic over Teton Pass, on highway 33, and up Ski Hill Road, addressing air quality, increased traffic density on winter road surfaces, and emission of climate change gases.

The expected impact on wildlife and human-wildlife interactions, including your rationale for proposing to put more people into wild spaces when some desirable terrain near the resort is currently off-limits to non-income generating access in winter months.

The expected impact on bicyclist safety, considering that the access road to the resort is one of the most popular road rides in the Teton Valley.

The expected increase in automobile and aircraft noise if the anticipated increase in tourism traffic is achieved.

The likelihood of increasing user conflicts by encouraging paying customers into areas currently used by those going there for the solitude, views, and wild and scenic nature of the terrain.

The responsibility of the Forest Service to take away public access to public land in the interest of increasing private profits.

The impact of changing the culture, economy, and rural nature of the Teton Valley.

The quantified need for more terrain, addressing the relative skier density of other competing resort areas in surrounding states. Is there a compelling need for more terrain to remain competitive? And is it the role of the Forest Service to provide more resources to a private entity to better position it against other public entities operating in other National Forests?

The secondary environmental impact of creating more demand for nightly and resort employee housing and related electricity to meet the hypothetical demands of a greatly expanded resort.

Provide several alternative strategies for increasing the value of the resort to the community and promoting more outdoor recreation that do not require transforming a smaller community resort into a larger destination resort less oriented to local residents. Include increasing resort utilization by simply allowing increased summer uses within existing boundaries.

Address the environmental and wildlife impacts of related lift, restaurant, and access road construction.

The environmental impacts of increasing snow making in the newly developed terrain, if snowmaking is indeed planned.

In short, all I have seen so far is a wish list from the resort. The purpose of conducting an EIS is to attempt to understand and quantify the impacts of granting those wishes and to make sure they serve the greater public good. I haven't seen any evidence that any thought has been given to that yet.