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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Dear Mel Bolling, c/o Jay Pence Teton Basin District Ranger

Resort expansion is something we've all become painfully familiar with over the past decade as every town and mountain range tries to out-compete another with skiable acreage. Often this comes at the expense of the community that lives in these small mountain towns year round, and while well intentioned, the goal of attracting tourism dollars truly does not benefit these communities long-term. With climate change impacting snowfall, wildlife habitat, and fire season across the west, this is not the time to make room for more ski lifts. This is the time to protect the wild environments that we have and do our best to make them resilient for the long term. I urge you to listen to the local community before approving these master plan developments. Look at the numbers. Alpine skiing is not a growing sport. Backcountry skiing is. How can Driggs and the surrounding communities make this a haven for backcountry skiing? Certainly not by expanding the resort into one of the most popular areas for backcountry skiing!

Teton Canyon is wilderness and is the most popular hiking area on the west side of Tetons. It is important habitat for bears, big horn sheep, and moose. Allowing construction of three new lifts and cutting runs on a south facing slope which is immediately adjacent to wilderness is simply not a good idea. This expansion could cut off public access and is completely unnecessary.

Thank you for your consideration, and please support and protect public lands rather than bowing to private business interests. Change the narrative that we've grown accustomed to and protect what is worth protecting.