

Date submitted (UTC-11): 10/11/2020 7:08:32 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Re: Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Project

I am a full-time resident of Driggs in Teton Valley, Idaho. My property has a full view of Fred's Mountain, Peaked Mountain, and the Tetons. The impacts of the proposed Project plan will have a direct impact on me, my property values, my community and the ecosystem I live in. I submit these comment in an effort to help Grand Targhee Resort develop in a responsible manner, but with full consideration of all environmental and community impacts, and with appropriate restrictions, controls, or disapprovals as needed.

1. Light Pollution. The impact of additional lights, especially those designated for night use, should be fully scoped and evaluated regarding views from all areas within the Teton Valley in Idaho. The view shed from the valley is highly prized for its mountain scenery, especially of the Grand Tetons. Any view of the Tetons generally includes Fred's and Peaked Mountains as well. The impact across the valley will likely be substantial and each additional lighting project should be scoped for both individual and cumulative impact on the existing resort and the Teton Valley view shed.

a. This is especially critical for the proposed Dreamcatcher restaurant and night-light projects such as tubing or race training.

b. Cumulative impacts of existing light pollution plus that proposed should be considered.

c. Potential impacts of light on both the existing resort area and Teton Valley from the proposed South Bowl and Mono Trees areas should be specifically evaluated. Use of alternative such as down-lighting may help locally, but still be highly visible from afar.

d. Impacts of light pollution should be scoped for both during construction activities and for full operation.

d. Dark sky ordinances within Teton Valley Idaho should be included in the analysis, with specific information about impacts both on stargazing within the valley as well as night views of the Teton Range.

2. Habitat and Wildlife Disturbance. The potential for impacts on existing habitat, migration and wildlife experiences both in the Teton Canyon and adjacent wilderness areas should be fully scoped, both for individual projects and cumulative impact. The expansion areas are well-known for being prime winter and summer habitat as well as important migration corridors. The ecosystem of the Teton Valley depends on this area, and visitors to the area often come for the experience of seeing wildlife. The economics of the tourist economy in the Valley relies on this as well.

a. This is particularly important evaluation for the expansion of the South Bowl and Mono Trees areas.

b. Impacts should be evaluated not just for large mammals, such as bear, moose, elk, and deer, but also for the entire ecosystem including birds, pollinators, small mammals, fish, and associated biota.

3. Guest Experience. The Project Plan repeatedly talks about the guest experience and expectations. Guest experiences are not just for transient tourists, but also locals. Adding lifts to service terrain that is currently adequately served adds to the cumulative impact to the environment without improving anything except the bottom line of the resort. Adding lifts to service currently unserved terrain has a broader impact. The environmental benefit and cumulative negative impacts of additional lifts within the current SUP should be fully scoped in the Draft EIS. The impact on existing recreational activities in the backcountry within Teton Canyon and the proposed South Bowl and Mono Trees should be evaluated.

4. Parking. Parking at the base area is already woefully inadequate. There is nothing in the Project Plan to address the needs of parking for people seeking to access an expanded ski area. Parking needs should be included in the scoping, with impacts to the environment from additional leveling of areas for parking, habitat destruction for those areas that will be used, and air quality impacts from lines of cars idling waiting for parking spaces on busy days.

5. Erosion. Impacts from erosion should be evaluated both from construction activities and long-term habitat alteration resulting from clearing of existing trees and plants for glade skiing as well as ski run development. Impacts from additional roads and construction should also be included. Erosional impacts can have both

serious short-term consequences (especially for streams and fisheries) and long-term instability issues, especially on steep slopes.

5. Impacts to Surrounding Communities and Teton Valley, Road Access. There is only one access road to the resort, which often has moose, deer and coyote on or near the road. Impacts to the wildlife from increased traffic on that road should be included in the scope of the Draft EIS. Impacts on summer recreation of bikers and hikers on the road should also be included. Impacts to the Valley from insufficient parking at the base areas should be considered.

6. Impacts to Surrounding Communities and Teton Valley, Air Pollution. The Project Plan is woefully deficient in mentioning the impacts on the Teton Valley Idaho communities and Alta, Wyoming. With the increase of guests at the resort year-round, traffic will necessarily also increase. Ski Hill Road and 2500 North will likely bear the brunt of increased traffic, as well as La Grande Pierre if it is finished as planned to connect to Ski Hill Road. All run through rural or residential areas and none are designed for high volume traffic with turn lanes, traffic signals, passing lanes, etc. The impacts to air quality, visibility and noise from increased traffic should be included in the Draft EIS, both for incremental expansion efforts and for total cumulative impact.

7. Impacts to Surrounding Communities and Teton Valley, Water Quality. The impacts to water quality in Teton Valley should be added to the scope of the analysis. The Valley relies heavily on individual wells for drinking water. Increased septic systems and water usage requirements should be evaluated for an area including long-term impacts on the Valley, not just impacts on the resort itself.

8. Impacts to Surrounding Communities and Teton Valley, Trash and Sewage. Evaluations of existing infrastructure to manage increased trash and sewage resulting from the Project Plan should be included in the scoping. Impacts both at the resort and on available services in the Valley should be considered.

9. Impacts to Surrounding Communities and Teton Valley, View Shed. Many of the above examples include view shed considerations, but additional consideration should be included for visibility of roads from the Valley, the Teton Canyon Corridor, Grand Teton National Park and the Jedediah Smith Wilderness Area. The skyline is iconic and all proposed actions should be evaluated with regard to visibility and impact on view shed both individually and cumulatively.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the scoping of the Draft EIS.