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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Hello Forest Officials,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input, concerns, compromises, and solutions during this process.

I currently enjoy Grand Targhee just how it is, and believe it is a well operated ski area with consistent natural snowfall and terrain for all abilities. It is a true "ski area", and remains distinct from the over-commercialized and highly developed "resorts". It contains plenty of advantages over other ski areas and resorts, and has proven to be a sustainable business, while even being a leader for environmental sustainability efforts. It has a priceless character, and a special environment.

I moved to the area in the Sacajawea Lift's first season of operation, and believe it was appropriately designed and incorporated into the ski area, and it was obviously also built to help phase in future ski area development on Peaked. It helped to spread out the increasing amount of users, and preserve a good experience and snow quality to this day.

Amongst my most serious concerns is how all future development could be phased in appropriately. It is nearly impossible for the public to review all aspects of a Resort District Master Plan or a USFS EIS while providing their concerns and preferred alternatives, and I'd like the USFS to re-examine the impacts after each major development would be incorporated. There is no reason to approve all of this at once.

I strongly suggest for the USFS to pause on expanding this Special Use Permit area for the next 10 years, and encourage GT to build out their permit area in the meanwhile. All commercial recreation activities and environmental disruption should remain contained to the area, and phased in appropriately. GT has so much terrain reserved for their snowcat operation, and should be allowed to build lifts in this previously impacted and permitted area. Once again, there is no reason to approve every single aspect of these plans, while GT still has so much undeveloped terrain. The "purpose and need" of this proposal far exaggerates the issue of staying competitive in the ski resort industry, and instead represents privatization of public land for increased assessed value of the resort itself.

I also am an avid user of the backcountry, which is obviously growing in popularity. This demographic is attracted to perfect powder and endless terrain beyond resort boundaries, and already provides plenty of impacts to pristine areas. We are fortunate that it is legal to be able to ski/ride the south facing terrain off GT and into Teton Canyon, while many other similar slopes are closed to recreating humans to protect the wildlife. I also feel that providing easier access to this terrain will result in dangerous situations(avalanches, skiers lost in the fog, overcrowding Teton Canyon Trailhead, etc). Please recognize that backcountry travel in this area is growing and impactful, and that enforcing any future closures would be met with contempt if Targhee is meanwhile allowed to expand their impacts.

It is otherwise impossible to assume the future impacts until there is a lift servicing the top of Peaked, and no further expansion approvals should be approved until after the future impacts can be known and mitigated. For

instance, is it a wise idea to have multiple chairlift far away from a base area that takes multiple chairs to get back to? People already become disoriented in their snowy/foggy climate. Peaked will be plenty to suffice!

As for the Mono Trees pod, I believe it is totally unnecessary to deforest this area for ski trails and lift development. This area's terrain and snow quality is subpar compared to the rest of the area, and it seems to contain the highest concentration of wildlife.

I know that socioeconomic concerns are outside of the USFS decision, and I hope to see Teton County Idaho become a cooperating agency to help guide the future growth. Currently, GT's visitation already maxes out their parking lot, and the effects of an expanding workforce, growing base area with year round residents, transit issues on the road, etc. Once again, please ensure that these decisions are all phased in properly, vetted thoroughly, and includes the input of locals that deeply appreciate the area exactly how it is.