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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I am providing input on the Project Plan for the proposed new developments at Grand Targhee Resort.

I have been skiing at Grand Targhee since 1975. My husband was on the Grand Targhee Volunteer Ski Patrol for 10 years, and we have been seasons pass holders since 1992. We are currently residents of Wilson, WY and Grand Targhee is still our favorite ski area. Why? Because it is far less crowded than Jackson Hole and the snow quality is far superior, largely because of the relative lack of lift capacity. We have seen the quality of the powder snow deteriorate over the years as the original fixed lifts were replaced with higher capacity lifts. Where we used to be able to ski untracked powder the entire day, it is now skied out by early afternoon. Adding five new lifts will significantly impact everything.

Please consider the following specific comments on the Proposed Project Plan as input for the Draft EIS.

- Lift capacities are specified for 5 of the new proposed lifts. These add up to 8400 persons per hour. However, there is no information provided on current lift capacity or on the additional lift capacity that the already approved Peaked Lift will provide. Nor is lift capacity specified for the new detachable Shoshone lift. How will the capacity of that lift compare with the existing lift? Current lift capacity versus proposed lift capacity in persons per hour should be clearly specified in the draft EIS as the number of people using the mountain will significantly impact everything, including the quality of the skier experience.
- There is no mention to improvements to the existing base facilities. Will hotel capacity be expanded? What about parking capacity? The current parking lots are already inadequate to hold all the cars on many days. People end up parking along the access road. How will the additional need for parking be addressed?
- Access to the resort is via a windy, two lane road. Traffic already backs up quite a ways on holidays and powder days. Are there any plans to widen the road? Those impacts will need to be considered, as do the impacts from emissions from the additional cars that will be traveling to the area.
- Water usage from the proposed snow making and restaurants needs to be considered. What will be the impact to the groundwater table? How much additional water usage is proposed? What improvements will need to be made to sewage treatment facilities as a result of the additional skier load, the restaurants, etc.
- Light pollution is a concern, especially from the restaurants and from the lighted racing trails. Any lights from the ski area will likely be very visible from the Teton Valley.
- How will the proposed developments impact the plentiful and diverse wildlife in the area? Will any sensitive habitats be destroyed by road development and trail development?
- Grand Targhee is adjacent to the Jedediah Smith Wilderness and the proposed lift to the North Boundary area will be right next to the wilderness boundary. I question whether a new lift is needed in that area. Will it be visible from the Jedediah Smith Wilderness? How visible will the new ski lifts, trails, and restaurants be from the hiking trails in Teton Canyon (Table Mountain, Alaska Basin, etc.)
- I support the development of additional on mountain facilities with food and bathroom facilities. Currently, those are something that is significantly lacking. However, putting a large restaurant on top south of the Dream Catcher lift with Teton views may not be the best solution. It will likely be very visible from the Jedediah Smith Wilderness as well as from Teton National Park. Perhaps it could be tucked into the trees in a less visible location off of the Teton Vista Traverse trail. This would help mitigate light pollution and visibility impacts. The same comments apply to the proposed restaurant on Peaked Mountain.
- What will be the impacts to the towns of Victor and Driggs, and the residents in the valley? This should be carefully evaluated. Bigger is not necessarily better.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments, and please add me to your email list for future notifications.