

Hello,

I am very concerned about the proposed Grand Targhee Resort expansion, and there are many questions that must be answered before proceeding with this proposal.

It is crucial for decision makers to analyze everything that has changed in the ecosystem and the community since the last forest plan was created and to incorporate that information into the decision making process.

My questions and concerns include:

### **Air Quality**

If increased numbers of vehicles travel to Grand Targhee Resort, this will add carbon emissions and other pollution to our valley.

- How many additional vehicles will travel through our valley? How much air pollution will this create? How will this air pollution be mitigated?
- How much air pollution will be created by construction activities? How will air pollution from construction activities be mitigated?
- What type of snowmaking equipment would be used? How much (and what types of) air pollution will this snowmaking equipment create? How will emissions from snowmaking be mitigated?
- How will all these cumulative emissions impact the ecosystem and residents of the region?

### **Water Quality and Quantity**

- How much water will snowmaking operations require? Where will water for snowmaking operations come from?
- Will wells be drilled? If so, how many wells? How deep will the wells need to be? How much water will they use?
- What are the ecosystem impacts of drilling these wells?
- How will water be transported to the on-mountain restaurants and other areas?
- What types of drilling or pipe-laying will be required to provide water to on-mountain locations?
- What secondary impacts will pipe-laying and well-drilling have on the ecosystem? Will this create erosion? Will it impact wildlife? Will it have other impacts? How will these impacts be mitigated?
- How will wastewater treatment be addressed?
- The area's wastewater treatment systems are already struggling to keep up with demand. How will this additional expansion affect these systems? Will all the systems be able to comply with EPA standards?

### **Climate Change**

- How does this plan account for the real and continuing impacts of climate change?
- How will this plan adapt to climate change as climate change continues and evolves?
- How will this plan mitigate for emissions in order to reduce its role in furthering anthropogenic climate change?

## **Wildlife**

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is one of North America's most vital ecosystems. It is largely intact and provides crucial habitat for numerous species.

- What endangered, threatened, and other special status species are impacted by this plan?
- When is construction supposed to occur? What animals are nesting or nurturing their young during that time of year? What other species are sensitive during that time of year? Is it important foraging time for wildlife?
- How will this project affect migratory animals? When will studies be conducted to ensure all migratory species are fully accounted for in terms of impact?
- How will this project impact habitat connectivity? How will it mitigate for any impacts to habitat connectivity? Will wildlife overpasses and underpasses be incorporated into the design?
- How will logging activities and heavy machinery impact species?
- During operational seasons, what wildlife habitat will be impacted? What species will be impacted? What wildlife habitat and species will be impacted during the "off seasons"?
- Will skiing, snowboarding, and other winter recreation occur in vital winter wildlife habitat? How many people will be in these areas? How many more people is that than these areas currently see?
- How do recreational activities like skiing and snowboarding impact species that are present? How do summer activities like biking and hiking impact species?
- How will avalanche control efforts impact species? How will the acoustic impact of explosives affect them? Will wildlife use their vital energy resources during a very fragile time of year (during winter) to attempt to flee these explosives? Will they cede the land and attempt to find food and survive elsewhere, thus losing important habitat?
- How will roads and lifts affect species? What research has been conducted regarding the impacts of roads (even seldom used ones) and lifts on species?
- How does the cumulative effect of noise (from human activities, mechanical devices like lifts and vehicles, and also explosives) impact the species present in these areas? How will "duds" and other explosive debris from avalanche control work be removed so they don't negatively impact wildlife?

The project area includes vital habitat for species like bear, moose, sheep, goats, wolverines, and other animals. It is possible human-wildlife conflict may occur due to encroachment on wildlife habitat.

- What are the plans for addressing this potential human-wildlife conflict?
- If species are in an area, will operations be shut down to provide the animal with necessary space?
- Will animals be hazed out of their territory or killed if conflict continues?
- How will visitors be educated about ways to avoid wildlife conflicts (or handle conflicts if they do occur)?
- Who specifically will address these wildlife conflicts and how will they do so in a timely manner? Is money budgeted for this education and enforcement?

## **Wilderness Values**

The proposed project area is very close to designated wilderness areas.

- Will these projects and expansions be visible from wilderness areas?
- Will noise from these projects intrude into wilderness areas?
- How will this project impact the wilderness characteristics and values (including viewscape) of the Jedediah Smith Wilderness?
- How will Teton Canyon and other wilderness visitors be impacted by this project?

- How will scenic values change?
- How much noise will be created?
- What are the light impacts that will affect wilderness visitors who are camping or otherwise recreating at night?
- How will these issues be addressed and mitigated?

### **Trees and Other Vegetation**

- What tree and plant species are in the impacted area?
- Which species are threatened, endangered, or otherwise of special concern?
- Have full surveys and analyses been conducted in these areas at multiple times of year to account for difficult-to-find species (like flowers that may be difficult to detect when they're not blooming)?
- How will impacts to affected species be mitigated?
- How many trees will be logged for ski runs, roads, and other projects? How many of these trees are old growth? What ecosystem functions do these trees provide? What animals nest in or near the trees or use them for vital life functions? How will these impacts be mitigated?
- How will removal of these trees and other vegetation affect wildlife species, including those used for human subsistence like deer and elk?
- How will the vegetative community (and wider ecosystem) be affected by this plan?
- How will cascading ecosystem impacts be addressed and mitigated?

### **Visual Resources and Scenic Values**

This project will expand far beyond its physical footprint, as it will be visible for many miles. This will impede our viewscape.

- Where exactly will the project be visible from? How far will lights be visible at night?
- What efforts will be taken to blend buildings and structures into the landscape?
- Which parts of the project will be visible from the Jedediah Smith Wilderness?

### **Light Impacts**

Dark skies are very valuable, not only for human enjoyment of the cosmos, but also to avoid providing animals with false cues which can disrupt migratory patterns and cause harm.

- How much light pollution will this project emit, both during construction and once completed?
- How much light will be created from restaurants, evening activities, trail lighting, etc.?
- Where will the light be coming from? What type of light will it be? How bright?
- How far will this light be visible from?
- What actions will be taken to mitigate this light pollution?
- What animals (both resident and migratory) may be impacted by this light? How will these impacts be mitigated?

### **Noise**

- How much noise will construction produce?
- How much noise will operations produce, including both human noise and noise from operations like lifts and vehicles?
- How will this cumulative noise impact wilderness areas when combined with noise from helicopter tours and other activities?
- How sensitive are wildlife species in the area (both resident and migratory) to noise?

- How will this noise be mitigated?

### **Recreation**

Public land should be available for all to use for recreation, without cost. The backcountry shouldn't be privatized. It should be available for all to enjoy, not just those who can pay for a lift ticket.

- How much previously accessible public land will be converted to be used exclusively for a private entity?
- How many people used this land previously for free, public recreation?
- What other areas are available for these individuals to use? Are these other areas comparable to the areas being turned into ski resort land? Will these areas become congested?
- For such an assessment, it's important to also look forward and incorporate projected growth rates for relevant activities. How much have backcountry skiing, snowboarding, and other relevant sports grown in recent years? How much are they projected to continue growing?
- How long a lease would this project entail? How many skiers, snowboarders, and other recreationists would this project displace from the backcountry over the total duration of the proposed lease? How many other recreational users (including users during summer, fall, and spring) would also be displaced by this lease?
- What is the justification for adding additional lifts outside the current boundaries? What is the cumulative impact of these lifts?
- How will this project impact forest users during summer, fall, and spring? How many people will be impacted by the new restrictions being placed on public land year-round?

### **Transportation and Traffic**

The traffic situation on Ski Hill Road is already very concerning, with huge traffic jams and line-ups already occurring on weekends, holidays, and powder days. This project seems like it would lead to further congestion, traffic, and additional carbon emissions from so many cars stuck in traffic, as well as those idling while waiting for parking spaces.

- What is the traffic management plan for this project?
- How many cars are projected to travel Ski Hill Road and through Teton Valley every day with this proposal? How many people will be in each of these cars?
- How much congestion will this lead to? How will this impact Driggs, Victor, Alta, and other communities?
- How much air pollution will these traffic issues create?
- Have traffic studies been conducted?
- How will traffic be managed?
- How will this traffic impact Teton Valley as a whole?
- Will shuttles be incorporated in this plan? If so, how will this plan entice people to use shuttles rather than drive their own vehicles?
- How will traffic regulations be enforced with the addition of so many vehicles to our road systems? Is there a budget for additional traffic enforcement?
- How will increased road use impact our roads? What additional road maintenance will this require? Who will pay for this additional road maintenance, and how will it be conducted efficiently to ensure the roads are in good condition?

Please consider these questions as you address this proposal.

Thank you,  
Kristen Pope