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Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects

Draft Record of Decision



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**Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects
Draft Record of Decision
Teton Basin Ranger District, Teton County, Wyoming**

Lead Agency: USDA Forest Service, Caribou-Targhee National Forest

Cooperating Agencies: Teton County, Wyoming; Teton County, Idaho; Grand Teton National Park; Teton Conservation District; and Wyoming Game and Fish Department

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Introduction

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents my decision and rationale for the selection of Alternative 2, as identified in the *Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects Final Environmental Impact Statement*, with some modifications. This decision authorizes the implementation of improvements included in the Grand Targhee Resort's (GTR) current master development plan (MDP). The current MDP, was accepted by the Caribou Targhee National Forest (CTNF) in February 2019. Forest Service acceptance of the 2018 GTR MDP does not constitute approval of individual projects. The elements of the MDP are intended to improve the recreational experiences available at the resort and on the Caribou-Targhee National Forest.

The majority of GTR's lift and trail network is located on National Forest System (NFS) lands under a special use permit (SUP) administered by Teton Basin Ranger District of the CTNF in Teton County, Wyoming. All base area (Targhee Village) facilities, existing guest service facilities, portions of the beginner terrain, and a few other ski trails, are located on private lands owned by GTR.

Project Background

Under the terms of the *National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986*, development and operation of ski areas on NFS lands is guided by MDPs, which describe existing conditions; identify physical, environmental, and socio-economic opportunities and constraints; establish the permittee's conceptual vision for the ski area; and outline near-to-long term plans for achieving that vision. As a condition of the permit issuance, the Forest Service must review and accept, modify or reject a ski area's MDP. MDPs are intended to be dynamic documents, amended, or revised periodically to reflect changes in operational opportunities and constraints, recreation-market demands, and agency management requirements.

One component of an MDP is planned development of the ski area's physical infrastructure. When a ski area permittee decides to move ahead with development that involves NFS land, the permittee submits a proposal to the Forest Service describing those MDP elements and requesting authorization to implement them. The Forest Service then evaluates the proposal, on the basis of established screening criteria. If a proposal is accepted, we initiate our decision-making process, including seeking public comments on the proposal and analyzing and disclosing the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives, in accordance with the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* (NEPA).

With GTR's proximity to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Park (GTNP), GTR is expected to experience increases in visitation from both winter and summer recreational enthusiasts. Several aspects of the facilities at GTR are in need of expansion and upgrade, including but not limited to, its terrain variety, lift operations, on-mountain guest facilities, and summer activities. To address industry growth, maintain its market niche, and meet increasing guest expectations, GTR must continue to develop and improve its on-mountain and base area offerings.

As part of the 2018 MDP, GTR identified a need to improve recreational experience and address shortcomings in their terrain offerings and operations to remain viable in the competitive destination skier/rider market. The implementation of individual projects identified in the 2018 GTR MDP is contingent upon subsequent site-specific analysis/approval in accordance with the NEPA. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) discloses the environmental impacts associated with the range of alternatives developed to meet the purpose and need for this project while responding to issues raised

through the public scoping and Draft EIS (DEIS) comment period. This ROD documents my decision to approve several projects identified in the 2018 MDP.

In my decision, I must determine:

- Whether to issue a new special use authorization.
- What improvements and activities to approve as part of the authorization.
- Which Project Design Criteria (PDC) are required for implementation.
- Whether to amend the forest plan as a result of the Selected Alternative.

Decision and Rationale

In making this decision, I have reviewed the project record, including the FEIS, comments received, input from cooperating agencies and technical reports. I am incorporating by reference the project record in its entirety.

After thoroughly considering the project purpose and need, issues, alternatives, and analyses presented in the FEIS, as well as the public and agency comments submitted, **I have decided to approve Alternative 2 – Proposed Action with modifications** (Selected Alternative). My approval of the Selected Alternative includes expansion of the existing SUP boundary into the South Bowl and Mono Trees areas but with reductions in the total acreage from what was originally proposed and analyzed in the FEIS. Although this decision will require one programmatic, and several project specific, forest plan amendments, the overall goals and objectives of the Selected Alternative are consistent with the Forest Plan. The Selected Alternative is depicted in this ROD in **Appendix A** as **Figure 2**, **Figure 3**, and **Figure 4**.

Elements of the Decision

The Selected Alternative includes the activities summarized below. A full description can be found in **Appendix B** of this document. All of the components of the Selected Alternative are approved as proposed in Alternative 2 with the exception of modifications to the expansion of the South Bowl and Mono Trees SUP boundary areas.

Within the Existing SUP Boundary

- Trail improvements and expansions including 107 acres of new traditional terrain, 107 acres of terrain improvements, 204 acres of approved glades, 45 acres of groomable glades
- New Crazy Hose Lift
- New North Boundary Lift
- Palmer Platter surface lift and lights
- One new teaching carpet
- Upgrade and realignment of the Shoshone Lift
- Upgrade and realignment of the Dreamcatcher lift, including a chondola
- Construction of a permanent, dedicated snow tubing facility at the base of the existing Shoshone Lift

- Mountain top guest facility at the summit of Fred’s Mountain south of the existing Dreamcatcher Lift top terminal
- Sacajawea Restaurant and Guest Facility at the top terminal of the Sacajawea lift
- Storage and vault toilet facilities at the base of the North Boundary Lift
- Improve the existing vault toilet at the bottom of the Blackfoot Lift to include a storage facility
- Guest facilities at the top of the Shoshone Lift and in Rick’s Basin
- Guest and chair storage facilities on Lightning Ridge near the top terminal of the approved Mono Trees Lift
- Three separate administrative route actions: Construction of 4.3 miles of administrative routes, reclamation of 2.2 miles of administrative routes , and improvements to 7.0 miles of administrative routes. All road work authorized in this decision are for administrative use and are not open to public use.
- Establishment of a Summer Activity Zone around the Shoshone Lift terminal to offer a hub for summer activities including a zipline, canopy tour/fly lines, an aerial adventure course, and the disc golf course
- 29 additional miles of hiking, biking, and multi-season recreation trails
- Expansion of Nordic, snowshoeing, and fat biking offerings
- 57 acres of additional snowmaking coverage

Within the Expanded SUP Operational Boundary

- Expansion of the SUP operational boundary by 694 acres to include lift-served skiing in the South Bowl and Mono Trees areas
- Approximately 160 acres of new trails and gladed areas
- One new lift in the South Bowl area
- One new lift in Mono Trees area
- Ski patrol facility at the top of the South Bowl Lift
- Vault toilet at the bottom of the South Bowl Lift
- Avalanche mitigation infrastructure (avalanchers, powder magazine, one bomb cache)

Within the Existing and Expanded Operational Boundary

- Construction of two construction, access, and maintenance administrative routes within the Mono Trees and South Bowl SUP areas totaling approximately 2.5 miles. All road work authorized in this decision are for administrative use and are not open to public use.
- Utilities and communication lines will be placed in existing disturbed areas or areas approved for ground disturbance in the EIS.

Reason For the Decision

My decision to authorize the Selected Alternative was made by considering how well it met the purpose and need for action and how it addresses the main environmental issues identified through public comment on the approved action, and interdisciplinary review. Before making this decision, I reviewed the FEIS and the supporting project record, which documents a thorough review of relevant information,

consideration of responsible divergent views, and acknowledgement of any incomplete or unavailable information. The analysis identifies the techniques and methodology used, including current and relevant science, and references scientific sources. A full discussion of impacts is provided in **Chapter 3** of the FEIS. A summary of these impacts are described in the Comparison Summary of Direct and Indirect Environmental Consequences Table in **Appendix D** of the FEIS.

I recognize that this decision is complicated due to the wide range of opinions of residents and visitors to Teton Valley regarding the proposed activities. In fully reviewing and considering public comments and the project record, I acknowledge that perspectives range from fully supporting the entire proposal for some, to support for ongoing and proposed activities without expansion, supporting certain aspects and not others for some, and total opposition to the entire proposal from others. It was not easy to determine a course of action that meets the desires of the public and GTR while complying with Forest Service management direction, particularly because the ski area is directly adjacent to Grand Teton National Park, the Jedidiah Smith Wilderness, and the communities within the Teton Valley.

An important consideration for me also included the acknowledgement that ski area operations are responding through increased opportunities, facilities, and experiences across the Nation as the public's recreational desires and uses are continuing to increase. This increased demand aligns with one of the Agency's top priorities to provide recreational access and supporting infrastructure. Serving a more diverse public that desires a wider range of winter and summer recreational opportunities at ski areas is becoming more important for the viability of the ski industry. I recognize that the actions authorized in this decision will result in changes to GTR as well as impact the communities that support and serve the residents and visitors therein. Whether this change is viewed as positive or negative is rooted in an individuals' values and their personal views on what a ski area should be, what level of recreation is acceptable on Forest Service lands, and what benefits or impacts will be experienced by the communities that surround the resort.

There are a wide range of ideas and desires for what GTR should be, how it should operate, and what types of activities should or should not be authorized. To best understand options and to inform my decision-making process, I relied on agency expertise, expertise within the ski industry, and business desires of GTR as a Forest Service permittee to inform me as to what is feasible, safe, and will provide a quality visitor experience.

After a thorough review of the public comments received, I acknowledge that there is disagreement regarding the degree of environmental impacts; however, the FEIS clearly indicates that the scale of environmental impacts will be within what will be expected in a highly developed winter and summer recreation area and will be in compliance with the Forest Plan as a result of approving both a programmatic and project specific amendments. That is not to say there are no effects, but that those effects are within the range of expected conditions for an existing ski area that serves both winter and summer use.

To mitigate or offset these anticipated impacts or effects, my decision includes the incorporation of all PDC and best management practices (BMPs) and requires GTR to adhere to them (refer to **Appendix C** of this Draft ROD for more information).¹ This decision is contingent on GTR developing a Construction Implementation Plan (CIP) for projects planned for construction each construction season. The CIP shall detail how the project(s) planned for construction are consistent with and will comply with this decision. The Plan will include specific construction management protocols (timelines, contracts, disturbance boundaries, grading and site plans, staging and parking areas, construction site access, and any required survey information), identification of applicable PDC, timber management protocols, an erosion and

¹ USDA Forest Service 2014a; USDA Forest Service 2014b

drainage management plan, a post-construction revegetation and restoration plan, protocols for noxious weed management, and adherence to BMPs. If during the course of implementation, GTR fails to adhere to the CIP, the Forest Service has the authority to suspend construction and/or operations.

Additionally, this decision requires that GTR develop an Operations and Boundary Management Plan that identifies agreed upon backcountry access points, physical closures, and operational measures to be taken. Further, this decision requires GTR to obtain all appropriate federal, county, town, and state reviews, approvals, and/or permits prior to the start of construction. These approvals/permits include but are not limited to: Army Corps of Engineers, Clean Water Act, Section 404 Permit; Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Large Construction General Permit for stormwater discharges; and Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Wyoming Water Quality Rules, Chapter 3 Permit to Construct. I am also requiring GTR to continue to work closely with the CTNF to monitor, track and evaluate project implementation and mitigation effectiveness in accordance with Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2509.19 Chapter 20 and 30. This is an ongoing aspect of the administration of the SUP.

My decision includes a reduction in the acres of authorized expansion of the Special Use Permit boundary in both the Mono Trees and South Bowl areas (**Figure 1**). Specifically the South Bowl area was reduced from 266 to 235 acres and the Mono Trees area was reduced from 600 to 459 acres. My rationale for the reduction in acreage of these approved boundaries included consideration of concerns raised by the public and other agencies and impacts disclosed in the FEIS. Moving the South Bowl Boundary uphill and away from the Apostle Cliffs will provide an increased buffer to further separate resort activities from the active bighorn sheep mineral lick and Wyoming Game and Fish mapped mule deer winter range. By reducing the extent of the South Bowl expansion and adding the requirement for GTR to produce and ensure a boundary management plan is in place, this modification aims to reduce the likelihood of human and big horn sheep interactions. Reducing the Mono Trees expansion area directly responds to a request that Wyoming Game and Fish provided in their comments on the DEIS. This expansion reduction removes the Mono Trees boundary from the Wyoming Game and Fish mapped mule deer winter range. The revised expansion areas remove boundary overlap with 24.31 acres of modeled high-quality summer habitat and 1.15 acres of modeled high-quality winter habitat for bighorn sheep. This reduction also helps reduce affects to the grazing permittee.

My decision also does not include the approval of a Teton County, WY snowmobile rescue cache in Teton Canyon and an avalanche rescue cache outside the resort boundary west of Mary's Nipple. Through communications with Wyoming Search and Rescue and the Teton County Wyoming Sherriff that have indicated they have a better and more sustainable cache in Alta and that maintaining a cache on Mary's will be unnecessary.

Overall, I believe the Selected Alternative effectively addresses the stated purpose and need for action and is also consistent with policies regarding ski area development.

The Selected Alternative:

- Supports Executive Order 14313 and one of the Agency's highest priorities by enhancing recreation access and visitor experiences, approving infrastructure and promoting safe and responsible outdoor opportunities. This decision expands the SUP operational boundary by 694 acres for GTR allowing for expansion of developed recreation opportunities.
- Provides a quality winter recreation experience while minimizing conflicts between use and wintering big game (as intended by the 1997 Forest Plan).

- Complies with 1997 Forest Plan direction to provide for privately operated recreation use within Management Prescription 4.2 – *Special Use Permit Recreation Sites*.
- Lays the groundwork, as prioritized by the Forest Service, for economic growth, job creation and a variety of recreational and commercial opportunities.
- Includes specific PDC, implementation sideboards, and BMPs developed to reduce impacts associated with approved activities to ensure impacts are minimized before, during, and after implementation.
- Modifies the SUP boundary in the South Bowl and Mono Trees areas. The approved boundary expansions were modified from what was initially proposed to respond to public, grazing permittee, cooperating agency, and stakeholder requests to reduce human/wildlife interactions in winter range, livestock grazing concerns, and safety concerns.

Consistency with the Project Purpose and Need and the Forest Plan

Implementation of the Selected Alternative requires a programmatic Forest Plan amendment, as well as five project-specific Forest Plan amendments pursuant to 36 CFR § 219 (2012 Planning Rule). The Forest Plan programmatic amendment will alter the management direction of 694 acres of NFS lands that will be converted from Management Prescriptions – 2.1.2 *Visual Quality Maintenance*, and 2.8.3 - *Aquatic Influence Zone* to Management Prescription 4.2 – *Special Use Permit Recreation Sites*. Under Management Prescription 4.2 – *Special Use Permit Recreation Sites*, the 694 acres will be managed as a ski area under a special use permit. This management direction will apply to all future projects and activities within this 694-acre area, as well as all resources within this area. This Forest Plan programmatic amendment will be effective for the life of the current Forest Plan.

The scope and scale of the project specific wildlife Forest Plan amendments are limited to areas where approved project impacts overlap areas of resources covered under 1997 Forest Plan Standards. The project specific Forest Plan amendments are intended to exempt project specific impacts from complying with certain Forest Plan standards. They are also project-specific and do not apply to future projects. These amendments are limited to wildlife resources (raptors) and are limited to the project area during project construction. The programmatic and project specific Forest Plan amendments are described in greater detail in **Appendix C** of the FEIS as well as the **Forest Plan Amendments** section below.

Analysis conducted in the FEIS demonstrates that several elements of the Selected Alternative will not fully meet the intent of certain guidelines in the 1997 Revised Targhee Forest Plan, Although the project incorporates design features and mitigation measures to maintain or restore ecological structure where feasible, some Forest Plan guidelines are not fully achieved due to the nature and location of approved development. A detailed, guideline-by-guideline discussion of consistency, the basis for determining when guidelines are not being met, and the corresponding rationale is provided in the Forest Plan Consistency Table in **Appendix B** of the FEIS.

Commitment to Minimizing Resource Impacts

Throughout the NEPA process, GTR and the CTNF have worked together to refine and adjust project designs and locations to minimize impacts to forest resources. From project scoping to the release of the FEIS, adjustments were made to the approved projects in response to resource concerns raised internally by the CTNF and externally by the public, as well as additional planning that occurred based on new resource information obtained throughout the process. Specifically, the following changes were made:

- Reduction to South Bowl SUP boundary expansion from the originally proposed 600 acres to 266 acres.
- Further reduction to the South Bowl SUP boundary expansion from 266 to 235 acres.
- Removal of South Bowl East and South Bowl Connector Lifts from the proposal.
- Reduction in Mono Trees SUP boundary expansion from the originally proposed 600 to 459 acres.
- Shorten Shoshone Lift alignment and instead install a Lift upgrade. As a result, reduce the number of proposed carpets in the Shoshone area and move the snowtubing facility to not interfere with the lift upgrade or proposed carpet.
- Removal of the guest support facility at the base of the formerly approved South Bowl East Lift and instead install a vault toilet at the base of the South Bowl West Lift, now called the South Bowl Lift.
- Instead of authorizing a permanent road associated with the South Bowl East Lift, build a Cat/Construction administrative route for a more primitive road with a smaller disturbance footprint.
- Removal of cat skiing from all alternatives.
- Improve the existing vault toilet at the bottom of the Blackfoot Lift to include a storage facility.
- Add ski patrol facility to the top of the proposed South Bowl Lift.
- Replace the Dreamcatcher Lift with a chondola in the same configuration that would provide the same capacity as the existing lift. Bottom and top terminals would be slightly adjusted. Chair storage would be included at the bottom terminal. The top terminal would be built to interface with approved Fred's restaurant for better accessibility. Communication site would be improved and sited with new lift and restaurant infrastructure.

To further reduce the impacts associated with the approved activities, this decision requires implementation of an array of PDC and BMPs. **Appendix C** of this document includes a comprehensive set of PDCs and implementation sideboards to ensure impacts are minimized before, during, and after implementation.

Consistency with the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act and Forest Service Direction

The Selected Alternative includes the development of multi-season recreation components, including mountain biking, multi-use trails, and the development of a summer activity hub and is consistent with the Ski Area Recreation Opportunity Enhancement Act (SAROE). In assessing these multi-season project components, I considered the following criteria and believe that the projects:

- Do not change the primary purpose of the ski area to something other than snow sports. The approved activities will supplement existing summer visitation and will increase visitation by a fractional amount when compared to winter use visits.
- Are consistent with the 2018 GTR MDP.
- Harmonize with the natural environment of the site where they will be located by—being visually consistent with or subordinate to the ski area's existing facilities, vegetation, and landscape; not requiring significant modifications to topography to facilitate construction or operations.
- Encourage outdoor recreation by being located outdoors in a natural setting, and in close proximity to other numerous outdoor recreational opportunities.

- Enable visitors to engage with the natural setting and may lead them to further explore other NFS lands.

Based on these criteria, the approved summer activities at GTR are consistent with SAROE.A.

Summary of Impacts

GTR and the CTNF worked collaboratively throughout the planning and NEPA processes to address potential resource impacts through modified project designs and the requirement for additional PDC to minimize impacts. The overall range of alternatives considered during the NEPA process, including the alternatives considered but dismissed from detailed analysis, was responsive and informative. I carefully reviewed the FEIS and the environmental impacts associated with all alternatives when making my decision. GTR has committed to implementing the PDC to address additional measures and concerns raised by members of the community.

There are indeed impacts, as disclosed in the FEIS and the supporting documentation. My decision accounts for anticipated impacts, positive and negative, that will result from implementation of the Selected Alternative. Overall, I am responsible for balancing the environmental and social impacts with the benefits the project will provide, including the PDC developed to reduce impacts. The following discussions provide additional detail on my considerations.

Effects to Recreation

As discussed in **Chapter 3, Section 3.1 – Recreation** of the FEIS, the approved projects will result in a net beneficial effect to developed recreation opportunities and guest experience at GTR, with increased capacity, improved terrain balance, and expanded multi-season use, while shifting some use patterns in adjacent undeveloped areas. The Selected Alternative supports one of the Agency’s highest priorities by enhancing recreation access and visitor experiences, by approving infrastructure and promoting safe and responsible outdoor opportunities. I acknowledge that the selection of this alternative may result in a shift in backcountry use patterns; however, I feel that this is outweighed by the safety that managed lift access in South Bowl will provide.

Effects to Scenery

The FEIS concludes that while the approved expansions and infrastructure will introduce additional visible elements, primarily through tree clearing and lift corridors, impacts will be minor, incremental, and consistent with the character of an existing developed ski area, and scenic integrity standards will still be met.

I recognize that implementation of the Selected Alternative introduces incremental changes within the project area; however, this is primarily within an already developed ski area landscape. Approved projects will introduce form, line, color, and texture that is not presently common when viewed from the southwest, east, and southeast; however, ski area activities will remain visually subordinate to the visual strength of the characteristic landscape. There is no doubt that elements of the Selected Alternative will be visible from a variety of locations. However, the analysis in the FEIS discloses the impacts and finds that they are in compliance with Forest Service scenery management direction (see **Section 3.2**). Based on this analysis, I think that anyone viewing GTR currently discerns the features of a developed ski area, and the Selected Alternative will not change that perception. The particular elements that viewers can see will change, but they will still be features that define a developed ski area and remain consistent with a managed recreation setting. Impacts will be mitigated through PDC to minimize contrast and maintain

scenic objectives and will not prevent the area from meeting the applicable Visual Quality Objective (VQO) of *Partial Retention to Maximum Modification*.

More specifically, I understand the public and Cooperating Agency's concern around the changes associated with the approved Fred's Mountain Top Guest Facility. I acknowledge that the restaurant at the top of Fred's Mountain will be visible from several key viewpoints, as discussed in the FEIS and Scenery Technical Report. To help address these concerns and better understand the potential changes introduced by this facility, 3 additional renderings/visual simulations were prepared and carefully assessed between the Draft and FEIS. The additional renderings demonstrated that the restaurant facility will remain visually subordinate to the broader landscape. As described in the FEIS, the approved facility is not expected to increase visual resource impacts such that the area will not meet its visual quality objective designation of *partial retention to maximum modification*. Approval of the construction of the Fred's Mountain Top Guest Facility is contingent on GTR submitting construction, engineering, architectural, and geo-technical plans to the Forest Service prior to construction. This ensures that plans meet required PDC and *Built-Environment Image Guide* requirements. Nighttime use of Fred's Mountain Top Guest Facility is not approved and any future plan/proposal for nighttime use will be subject to additional NEPA review and cannot be permitted via changes in the operating plan. Additionally, operation of this facility shall be limited to no later than one hour past the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) published sunset time for each day of the year. On this basis and with appropriate PDC, I do not feel that the Selected Alternative will negatively impact scenery resources or dark skies.

Effects to Social and Economic Resources

The approved projects have the potential to affect not only the physical environment but also the social and economic environment. A correlation exists between public use of NFS lands and the economies and societies of adjacent communities. This correlation encompasses many factors such as seasonal tourism, population, visitor spending, employment, affordable housing, personal income, and county funding and tax revenues, which are assessed and disclosed in the FEIS (see **Section 3.4**). The public comments received during the scoping period for this project provided insight into the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the residents of the study area. Although not all values, beliefs, and attitudes are captured in the analysis, the information received through public comment is the best available data. Comments related to the quality of life centered around the following: increased demand for social services and other infrastructure, income disparity in the study area, and limited affordable housing and increased demand for it.

The Selected Alternative is expected to add additional full-time employees, increase total annual labor income, increase total annual tax, and increase total annual visitor spending (as described in the FEIS). I recognize that each of these elements does not come without a cost further straining housing availability and affordability.

Broader housing and regional growth dynamics between Teton County, Wyoming and Teton County, Idaho are outside the scope of this federal decision and are influenced by factors beyond this SUP authorization. My purview as the Forest Supervisor is limited to actions on federal lands.

Effects to Wilderness

The FEIS describes a qualitative analysis of potential impacts of the Selected Alternative on the wilderness character and wilderness characteristics of the Jedediah Smith Wilderness (JSW). Although the wilderness characteristics described in the FEIS (see **Section 3.9**) offer well defined standards for analyzing impacts on the wilderness experience of users in the JSW, wilderness experience is intrinsically subjective and intangible to the public. Wilderness experience impacts considered substantial to one

individual may be considered trivial to another. This is important because the analysis of direct and indirect environmental consequences included in the FEIS are limited by the subjective nature of the wilderness experience. Although wilderness experience may be subjective to the public, as stated in the FEIS, there are specific characteristics used to define wilderness areas using tangible qualities of character. These criteria are the basis for the analysis and the disclosed impacts in the FEIS. Due to the high level of subjectivity of the user of the wilderness area, my decision is centered around the impacts to the tangible characteristics.

Due to the existing shared boundary between the JSW and GTR, there are current uses and operations that influence the wilderness area both during the winter and summer months. The greatest potential to impact the soundscape on the JSW is during the summer months due to construction activities. Past and ongoing projects have resulted in the use of helicopters and heavy machinery. However, these alterations to the soundscape are temporary in nature and vary in proximity to the JSW boundary. Use of the Dreamcatcher lift facilitates increased use of the JSW in both summer and winter, due to convenient access. There are existing measures in place that help curb the extent to which GTR access points contribute to the dispersal of guests into the wilderness. Under the existing operation it is expected that there are no impacts to the untrammelled, undeveloped, natural or solitude/primitive recreation characters.

The Selected Alternative, as demonstrated in the FEIS, will result in a number of projects being implemented within the existing GTR SUP boundary, as well as additional project infrastructure in the expanded areas. No expansion of the SUP boundary will occur within the JSW. Additionally, it is important to note that the approved SUP boundary expansion will not abut anymore of the JSW than it already does. Depending on the perception of individual users, opportunities for solitude within the JSW could be reduced in the long-term and short-term as a result of avalanche mitigation and construction operations. Overall, due to the Fred's Mountain Top Guest Facility and line of site voices, there will be impacts on the quiet nature of the soundscape of the JSW.

The Selected Alternative will not involve installation of any infrastructure within the JSW. However, the possibility of increased use associated with over the snow travel provide proximal access to the JSW. Therefore, possible trammeling within the JSW may occur. Similarly, increased trammeling may occur in the summer, as the approved Summer Activity Zone is expected to increase summer visitation.

All infrastructure, under the Selected Alternative, will be installed outside the JSW and will not introduce any permanent improvements or human habitation to the JSW, so the undeveloped quality of these lands will not be reduced. The Selected Alternative will, however, result in effects of modern people on the ecological systems existing within the JSW. The approved activities will result in indirect disturbance to the ecological processes occurring within the JSW. This may cause the JSW to not be substantially free from the effects of modern civilization. For this reason, the natural quality of these lands will be reduced, and the effect will be minorly adverse.

The analysis presented in the wilderness section of the FEIS indicates that the scale of the environmental impacts will be within what will be expected in a developed winter and summer recreation area and are within Forest Plan standards for this land use designation. That is not to say that there no effects, but that those effects are within the range of expected conditions for an existing area that serves both winter and summer use. Further, the Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984 made note of buffer zones around designated wilderness areas: *Congress does not intend that the designation of wilderness areas in the State of Wyoming lead to the creation of protective perimeters or buffer zones around each wilderness area. The fact that non-wilderness activities or uses can be seen or heard from within any wilderness area shall not, of itself, preclude such activities or uses up to the boundary of the wilderness area.* Therefore, the Selected Alternative is not in violation of the Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984.

Effects to Wildlife, Fish, and Whitebark Pine

Concerns over impacts on a variety of wildlife species were brought up in public comments and addressed in the FEIS. The wildlife analysis in the FEIS (**Section 3.13**) identifies species information, their habitat within the project area, and potential to be affected by the approved projects. Below is a summary of those impacts for species that have habitat within the project area. Although project specific Forest Plan amendments are required, habitat impacts are incremental relative to the broader landscape and do not threaten species viability at the Forest scale. Across all species analyzed under the Selected Alternative, the following determinations were made:

Threatened and Proposed Species (Carried Forward)

Canada Lynx (Threatened)

Activities authorized under the Selected Alternative will convert currently mapped suitable lynx habitat to linkage areas or non-habitat within the Teton Creek and Badger Creek Lynx Analysis Units (LAU). The effectiveness of lynx habitat within Mono Trees and South Bowl is likely currently low because low horizontal cover does not support snowshoe hares. Decreased effectiveness will continue with expansion of the operational boundary into these areas. However, both areas will continue to provide for lynx movements within and between LAUs. Activities authorized under the Selected Alternative will add cumulatively to the net effects of habitat conversion that has occurred within both LAUs. The increase in visitor traffic anticipated on Ski Hill Road and Teton Pass to access GTR is not expected to lead to a measurable increase in the probability of lynx mortality on either road. Effects to lynx were assessed at the LAU scale, and it was determined that authorized activities will have insignificant and/or discountable effects on lynx because the project area is not expected to be used heavily or provide significant prey sources and ample habitat will remain viable within the LAU. As a consequence, the Selected Alternative **MAY AFFECT, BUT IS NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT**, the Canada lynx.

Grizzly Bear (Threatened)

The Selected Alternative has the potential to adversely affect individual grizzly bears and potentially cause mortality of individual bears, through human-bear conflicts into the future. To reduce the potential for human-bear conflicts, a PDC was developed requiring all food products, containers, and bear attractants be disposed of in self-locking, certified bear resistant containers or dumpsters approved by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee. Additionally, all construction crew and GTR must comply with Forst Order Number 04-15-23-117.

Upon implementation of the Selected Alternative, over 101,000 acres of secure habitat will remain in the Teton BAU and continue to provide habitat for grizzly bears. The grizzly bear population within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem has increased from approximately 200-300 bears in 1975 to an estimated 1,000 in 2021, though population growth has slowed in recent years.² Given the regional population status of grizzly bears and widespread availability of secure grizzly bear habitat and valuable vegetative cover types for grizzly bears throughout the Teton Bear Analysis Unit (BAU), the authorized activities are not expected to impact the viability of the grizzly bear population in the Teton BAU or Targhee Planning Area. However, because incidental take of individuals will become more likely (over the life of the 50-year permit), the Selected Alternative **MAY AFFECT, AND IS LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT**, the grizzly bear.

² Haroldson 2022; USFWS 2016

- Inclusion of PDC will require coordination with Forest Service wildlife biologist if a grizzly bear den is found during project construction/implementation.

North American Wolverine (Threatened)

The Selected Alternative will have effects on wolverines and their habitat and denning habitat in the South Bowl and Mono Trees expansion boundaries. However, the effects at the scale of the home range for a female wolverine will not be significant. In response to the presence of suitable wolverine denning habitat in the expansion areas, a PDC was developed to apply appropriate protections (e.g., buffers) for any active wolverine den that may be found in the existing and expanded SUP boundaries during construction and on-going operations.

The noise and commotion associated with winter recreation in the expanded SUP areas are expected to preclude use of habitat for wolverine life requisites other than travel to and from more suitable habitat. However, when analyzed at the scale of a female wolverine home range, the addition of the 694 acres into the SUP will be insignificant.

In addition to the effects from winter recreation and associated noise, the avalanche control authorized in the South Bowl expansion area of the Selected Alternative will result in adverse effects to wolverines. Avalanches pose a threat to wolverines under both natural and controlled conditions. Avalanches currently occur in South Bowl and pose an existing threat of mortality to wolverines, especially due to the large size of uncontrolled avalanches. With the addition of South Bowl into the SUP area, there will likely be an increase in the frequency of avalanches due to control efforts, although these frequent avalanches will likely be less severe than uncontrolled avalanches. If a wolverine to be caught and killed by a management induced avalanche, this will no longer be considered a chance occurrence but will be directly induced by the addition of South Bowl to the SUP area. Therefore, since an individual wolverine could be killed by a management-induced avalanche, implementation of the Selected Alternative **MAY AFFECT, AND IS LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT** individual wolverines.

Monarch Butterfly (Proposed Threatened)

Implementing the Selected Alternative will convert portions of forests and shrublands to grass/forb dominated ski trails, resulting in an overall decrease in canopy cover across the existing SUP Area and within the expansion areas. As a result of these habitat conversions, there will also be an increase in edge habitat and an increase in overall habitat diversity in the project area. The project area lacks milkweed to support monarch breeding but does contain habitat with potential to support migrating/moving adult butterflies. The conversion of forest and shrublands to herbaceous vegetation and decrease in canopy cover will benefit monarch butterflies by increasing available nectar sources. Suitable roosting habitat will remain in the residual forest stands, included within approved gladed areas. As a result, the Selected Alternative is not likely to adversely affect, and is **NOT LIKELY TO JEOPARDIZE THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE SPECIES OR RESULT IN THE DESTRUCTION OF ADVERSE MODIFICATION OF PROPOSED CRITICAL HABITAT.**

Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee (Proposed Endangered)

Implementation of the Selected Alternative will convert areas of forest and shrubland habitat to more open grass/forb conditions due to development of ski trails, glades, roads, lifts, and other infrastructure. Removal of conifers will increase light penetration to the forest floor and may increase water and nutrient availability within the understory, which could promote shade-intolerant flowering plant species. Approved ski runs may also revegetate over time with grasses and forbs that could provide nectar sources for bumble bees. Although some habitat types beneficial to foraging bumble bees may increase in the

project area, forested habitat and adjacent meadow or shrub habitats may provide important habitat for host bumble bee colonies, or overwintering queens. Permanent conversion of habitat associated with roads, infrastructure, and the summer activity zone will reduce the availability of potentially suitable habitat within the project area. Although these disturbance areas are relatively small compared to the size of the overall project area, construction activities could affect potential host nesting habitat or overwintering habitat for queens if present. However, large areas of similar habitat will remain adjacent to and surrounding the project area, and the approved activities are not expected to meaningfully reduce habitat availability for Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee or its host species on a regional scale. As a result, the Selected Alternative is **NOT LIKELY TO JEOPARDIZE THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE SPECIES OR RESULT IN THE DESTRUCTION OF ADVERSE MODIFICATION OF PROPOSED CRITICAL HABITAT.**

Whitebark Pine (Threatened)

The Selected Alternative will impact whitebark pine (WBP) within the existing SUP area as well as the South Bowl and Mono trees expansion areas. The Selected Alternative will result in a reduction in WBP in the project area. Trees that remain and are not directly impacted by construction may be indirectly affected by project related activity such as soil compaction, altered hydrology, or ongoing trail maintenance. Grading around remaining trees during construction or mowing and grooming of new trails could affect the health and viability of remaining individual WBP or interrupt regeneration of WBP. However, PDC will help ensure that project impacts are minimized and that preservation of WBP is prioritized following project implementation. These include requiring that WBP management guidelines be included in an updated Vegetation Plan as required to be part of the SUP for GTR. As part of the Vegetation Plan, that WBP Plus Trees will be preserved and protected, WBP trees will be selectively retained when practicable during tree removal for glades or trails, and resort employees will be trained to avoid harming WBP during maintenance activities. These criteria will help promote the continued existence and regeneration of WBP in the study area. Avalanche control also has the potential to impact individual WBP trees. Natural avalanches already impact the species, but avalanche control activity has the potential to increase frequency of avalanches but decrease avalanche size and severity. It is not well understood how avalanche control activity impacts landscapes and species compared to natural avalanches. As a result, the Selected Alternative **MAY AFFECT, AND IS LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT** whitebark pine.

Forest Service Region 4 Sensitive Species

For all 11 of the Region 4 Sensitive Species analyzed (bighorn sheep, great gray owl, boreal owl, flammulated owl, American goshawk, peregrine falcon, three-toed woodpecker, Columbia spotted frog, western toad, Yellowstone cutthroat trout, and Townsend's big-eared bat), the Selected Alternative *May Impact Individuals or Their Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute to a Trend Toward Federal Listing or Loss of Population Viability.* A few various species have been further described below.

Bighorn Sheep

Bighorn sheep have been documented using habitat in the approved South Bowl expansion area in early winter, spring, summer, and fall. Wyoming Game and Fish Department habitat modeling based on detection data and bighorn sheep habitat requirements identifies high quality winter habitat in South Bowl and high-quality summer habitat in both South Bowl and the existing SUP. Use of habitat south and east of the project area in close vicinity has also been well documented including frequent and year-round use of the Apostle Cliffs mineral lick and access to this habitat likely occurs through South Bowl.

The Teton Range bighorn sheep herd is a unique, native population, genetically isolated, numerically and effectively small, and occupies a limited range; therefore, viability of the herd is a concern and conservation of the herd is a priority for land management agencies.³ Loss of habitat within and in the vicinity of the project area, particularly in South Bowl and in Teton Canyon, which is likely accessed through South Bowl, has the potential to harm viability of the Teton Range Herd. Bighorn sheep use of South Bowl during mid-winter has not been officially documented, however, evidence from National Park Service and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) camera and GPS collar surveys suggests that South Bowl serves as a movement corridor for year-round access to habitat in Teton Canyon below the project area. Sheep activity at the mineral lick has been well documented during winter months and expansion of the ski area boundary into South Bowl will likely impact movement patterns and limit access to down-canyon habitat, particularly in the winter during lift operation when Teton Range sheep are especially avoidant of human activity.⁴ However, through the Selected Alternative, the expansion boundary for the South Bowl area was modified to move it uphill and away from the Apostle Cliffs to provide an increased buffer to further separate resort activities from the mineral lick. Additionally, a PDC was developed for GTR to establish a double-rope boundary around the South Bowl expansion area with the Forest Service Wildlife Biologist coordinating on backcountry access points to minimize human encroachment on modeled bighorn sheep habitat. Commencement of construction authorized under the Selected Alternative, followed by ongoing ski resort operation (e.g., winter and summer recreation activities, avalanche control activities) have the potential to render modeled high-quality winter and summer habitat in the South Bowl expansion area unusable for the Teton Range bighorn sheep herd.

Bighorn sheep may adjust movement patterns and habitat ranges to spend more time in the Jedediah Smith Wilderness adjacent to the project area; however, degradation of habitat in South Bowl and Teton Canyon due to the development, combined with projected increasing recreation activity throughout the range of the Teton bighorn sheep herd, has the potential to significantly reduce access to adequate nutrition and protective habitat. As a result, the Selected Alternative has the potential to result in an overall decline in the population of the Teton Range Herd, but across the Targhee Planning Area (which contains multiple herds), the Selected Alternative **May Impact Individuals or Their Habitat but will Not Likely Contribute to a Trend Toward Federal Listing or Cause a Loss of Population Viability.**

Boreal Owl

Boreal owl detections occurred within the project area (existing SUP, Mono Trees, and South Bowl) during the breeding season in 2019, and based on survey data, CTNF biologists identified two 30-acre nesting areas. A project specific Forest Plan amendment on Boreal Owl Habitat Standard 1 (see **Forest Plan Amendments** section below) is necessary to carry out project activities within the project area. The authorized projects will impact boreal owl nesting sites, reduce the amount of suitable nesting habitat in the project area, may displace individual owls from current nesting territories, and potentially deter use of habitat in and near the projects. These impacts have the potential to reduce breeding and nesting success of individual owls in the project area. However, a PDC prohibiting vegetation clearing/construction activities within the boreal owl designated 30-acre territories from March 1 to August 15 will help prevent individual mortality and protect nesting activity.

Habitat modeling for the Targhee Species Viability Study estimates that approximately 358,302 acres of potential boreal owl habitat (habitat classified as very good, good, or moderate) exists within the Targhee Planning Area.⁵ Detection data from pre-project surveys, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) observations, and

³ TRBSWG 2020

⁴ Courtemanch 2014

⁵ Miller et al. 2022

Forest Service route surveys indicate that boreal owls occur outside of the project area throughout the Targhee Planning Area. Because the Approved Action may affect the success of individual boreal owls in the project area, but the forest level population is likely to remain viable, the Selected Alternative **May Impact Individuals or Their Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute to a Trend Toward Federal Listing or Loss of Population Viability.**

Flammulated Owl

Flammulated owl detections occurred within the project area (existing SUP, Mono Trees, and South Bowl) during the breeding season in 2019. Based on survey data, CTNF biologists identified several nesting areas within the Mono Trees, Peaked, and Sacajawea terrain areas. A project specific Forest Plan amendment on Flammulated Owl Habitat Standard 1 (see **Forest Plan Amendments** section below) is necessary to carry out project activities within the project area. The authorized projects will reduce the amount of suitable flammulated owl nesting habitat in the project area, may displace individual owls from current nesting territories, and deter use of habitat in and near the projects. However, a PDC prohibiting vegetation clearing/construction activities within the flammulated owl designated 30-acre territories from May 1 to August 15 was developed to help prevent individual mortality and protect nesting activity.

There is 10,530 acres of late seral, late seral and old growth, and late seral/potential old growth forests within the analysis area and only 2 percent will be impacted by the Selected Alternative. Further, the Targhee Species Viability Study estimates that about 290,533 acres of habitat (habitat classified as very good, good, or moderate) with potential to support flammulated owls occurs in the Targhee Planning Area.⁶ Detection data from IDFG and observations from Forest Service route surveys indicates that flammulated owls occur outside of the project area. The Selected Alternative will impact active flammulated owl nesting territories, reduce suitable habitat in the project area, and potentially reduce nesting or foraging success of individual owls, but ample suitable habitat in the vicinity and occurrences elsewhere in the Targhee Forest Plan area indicates that the Selected Alternative **May Impact Individuals or Their Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute to a Trend Toward Federal Listing or Loss of Population Viability.**

American Goshawk

Active American goshawk nesting was documented at three nest sites within one mile of the project area (existing SUP, Mono Trees, and South Bowl) to the west for four consecutive years from 2019 to 2022, indicating that a breeding pair of goshawks occupy a territory in the area (R04F15D56T17). An equal to or greater than 200-acre nesting area, 400-acre fledging area, and 5,400 acre foraging area were delineated in suitable habitat surrounding the nest sites in the Mono Trees expansion area. A project specific Forest Plan amendment to goshawk Size of Each Area Standard and Management Season Standard (see **Forest Plan Amendments** section below) is necessary to carry out project activities within the project area. Authorized projects will impact a total of 4.47 acres of in the nesting area and 128.96 acres in the post-family fledging area. Removal of forest habitat within the identified nesting and fledging areas has the potential to impact nesting success and foraging behavior of individual goshawks that are known to nest in the vicinity of the approved project. However, a PDC prohibiting vegetation clearing/construction activities within the American goshawk 200-acre nest area from April 1 to August 15 was developed to help prevent individual mortality and protect nesting activity.

An estimated 1,431 acres of suitable American goshawk nesting habitat currently exists in the project area. The Selected Alternative will result in 522 acres of impacts to suitable nesting habitat, 309 acres of which occur in the Mono Trees expansion area. The removal of forest cover may impact the fitness and

⁶ Miller et al. 2022

nesting success of American goshawks in territory R04F15D56T17. The Approved Action will also limit future options for new nest locations in the area due to removal of suitable habitat elsewhere in the project area. Habitat modeling for the Targhee Species Viability Study mapped about 266,224 acres (habitat classified as very good, good, or moderate) of potential goshawk habitat across the Targhee Planning Area.⁷ Documentation of 64 American goshawk nesting territories throughout the Targhee Planning Area, more than half of which have been occupied in the past 10 years, further illustrates that American goshawk habitat in the Targhee Planning Area is not limiting. The Approved Action could result in the abandonment of territory R04F15D56T17; however, sufficient forest habitat will remain in the Targhee Planning Area to support the viability of the species. The Selected Alternative **May Impact Individuals or Their Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute to a Trend Toward Federal Listing or Loss of Population Viability.**

Peregrine Falcon

Cliff outcroppings in the South Bowl expansion area provide suitable nesting habitat for peregrine falcons and herbaceous and open habitat types in the project area (existing SUP, Mono Trees, and South Bowl) provide potential foraging habitat. Peregrine falcon breeding or nesting activity has not been detected in the project area, however, two eyries within two miles of authorized projects have been used by peregrine falcons most recently in 2008 (Apostle Cliffs) and 2018 in the southern side of Teton Canyon. Authorized projects may deter falcons from using otherwise suitable nesting habitat or modify nesting or foraging behavior. Grading and vegetation clearing in foraging habitat may remove some habitat or impact prey availability; however, clearing of forested areas for the approved projects will increase open areas and could result in a net gain of potential foraging habitat for peregrine falcons in portions of the project area. Noise and activity during construction activities or ongoing disturbance from new recreation-related activities (e.g., skier use, grooming, avalanche control, hiking, mountain biking, and maintenance activity) could adversely modify peregrine falcon nesting and/or foraging behavior.

The Selected Alternative will bring increased noise and activity to known eyries and has the potential to deter or disrupt nesting peregrine falcons. A project specific Forest Plan amendment to Peregrine Falcon Habitat Standard 3 is necessary to complete project activities. A PDC pertaining to vegetation removal during the migrating bird nesting season will help protect nesting activity if it were to occur in the project area. Also, a PDC indicating that if a Forest Service sensitive species, including their nest sites, are identified during implementation or operation that were not identified during previous field surveys, and actions will be suspended until Forest Service wildlife biologist is contacted. Additionally, the abundance of cliff habitat in nearby Teton Canyon suggests that nesting habitat is not limited, and numerous eyries have been documents throughout the Targhee Planning Area. IDFG, WGFD, and the Forest Service observation data also shows that peregrine falcons are widespread throughout the Targhee Planning Area. Construction and ongoing recreation activities have the potential to disturb peregrine falcon nesting and foraging behavior in and near the project area, but nesting habitat outside the impact area and widespread occurrence of nesting falcons forestwide indicates that the Selected Alternative **May Impact Individuals or Their Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute to a Trend Toward Federal Listing or Loss of Population Viability.**

Species of Local Concern

Six Species of Local Concern (SOLC) were analyzed including moose, mule deer, elk, American pika, pacific marten, and gray wolf. For the moose a determination of *will likely impact individuals, but not have significant impacts to the overall population* was made. For the elk a determination of *will likely not have significant impacts to overall populations* was made. For the American pika, pacific marten and gray

⁷ Miller et al. 2022

wolf a determination of *could impact individuals, but is not likely to impact at the population scale* was made. For the mule deer the project activities will result in a decrease in habitat and increased disturbance in crucial winter range. A PDC has been included to minimize impacts to mule deer winter range by establishing a double-rope boundary around Mono Trees and placing backcountry access points in places that will minimize impacts on habitat. With inclusion of the PDC a determination of *will likely not have significant impacts to overall populations* was made.

Migratory Birds (MBTA-Protected)

Various migratory birds were analyzed in the FEIS including the golden eagle and other forest and meadow nesting migratory birds. Through incorporation of specific PDC that states: “Vegetation clearing activities are generally planned to occur outside of the migratory bird nesting period, which is typically from May 15 to July 15. If vegetation clearing activities must occur during the nesting period, U.S. Forest Service personnel (or individuals deemed qualified by the Forest Service) will conduct nest searches in appropriate habitats prior to the commencement of the vegetation clearing activities. The exact area to be surveyed will be based on the scope of the surface disturbance activities, the habitat to be disturbed, and the potential species to be impacted. If nesting migratory birds occur, the Forest Service will delineate appropriate buffers and halt construction within the buffers until the nesting is complete,” the Selected Alternative has the potential to impact birds at the local level but will be unlikely to substantially impact populations.

Fish

Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout

The Selected Alternative has the potential to indirectly impact Yellowstone cutthroat trout habitat outside of the project area (existing SUP, Mono Trees, and South Bowl). However, the approved indirect impacts will not alter peak flows or water yields to a large enough degree that they will impact channel morphology function or cause additional erosion downstream in Teton Creek where Yellowstone cutthroat trout habitat exists. The chairlift base approved within Mono Trees is located within the AIZ of Mill Creek. However, PDC will be followed to minimize impacts to Mill Creek. There are no anticipated impacts to waterways within South Bowl. Project Design Criteria will reduce negative impacts within the AIZ and adjacent water bodies. Downstream Yellowstone cutthroat trout habitat outside of the project area in Teton Creek will continue to support the species and provide spawning areas. As a result, the Selected Alternative **May Impact Individuals or Their Habitat, But Will Not Likely Contribute to a Trend Towards Federal Listing or Loss of Population Viability.**

In summary, the FEIS concludes that while individual animals may be affected locally, population-level viability is not expected to be substantially impacted, with specific PDC incorporated. I feel that through the incorporation of various PDC, as identified in **Appendix C** in this document, impacts to wildlife will be minimized.

Effects to Hydrology, Geohydrology, and Wetlands

The scope of the hydrology analysis in the FEIS (see **Section 3.15**) focused on surface water and groundwater flows located within the existing and approved GTR SUP areas. The project area includes several watersheds containing various un-named ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial channels. There are also multiple aquifers below GTR that are influenced by activities at GTR.

Various water quality standards were taken into account for this analysis. One possible water quality contaminant is sediment from erosion of disturbed areas. Clearing of trees and creating new ski and

mountain biking trails, erosion becomes more likely. Specifically, runoff that flows through the Papoose Creek watershed over erodible Hominy Creek and Darby Formations could transport sediments to Mill Creek and Dry Creek and through the Madison Limestone. Further, projects adjacent to Mill Creek and Dry Creek have a high probability of contributing sediment to the two creeks.

The project area lies on Karst topography, which is composed of soluble rocks like limestone. These areas are characterized by springs and underground caves in which the hydrogeology can be vulnerable to contamination due to runoff being transported through subsurface channels. This topography could result in nutrient loading and contamination to the nearby public water systems (PWS) from the approved wastewater treatment for on-mountain facilities. The City of Driggs PWS and the Alta Community Pipeline are approximately 4.5 miles from the approved wastewater treatment plants. BMPs in place during both construction and operation will mitigate impacts of erosion and thus decrease the possibility of impacts to water quality. As discussed in the FEIS, due to the large distance between the possible nutrient contamination area and the downstream PWS, the nutrients will likely be taken up by plants, air, natural bacteria, and soils along the water runoff pathway. These nutrients will then be converted to different forms of nitrates and phosphates that are not threats to water quality and are considered part of the natural nitrogen and phosphorus cycles. Therefore, the likelihood of nutrient contamination being a threat to water quality downstream of the existing and approved GTR SUP area is low.

To prevent on-site and off-site erosion and sedimentation problems, these new areas will require a more aggressive application of BMPs than have been applied previously to the core areas on the Madison Limestone. Project design criteria and BMPs that are not normally required for the operations that occur in other parts of the SUP area will be required for actions that occur over the Hominy Peak and Darby formations in the Madison Limestone. These include, but are not limited to:

- Developing an aggressive BMP plan to protect public water systems by avoiding sensitive areas or highly erosive soils, minimizing runoff, erosion, and sediment delivery to streams.
- Implementing more aggressive sediment slope-stabilization like contour-felled logs, contour trenches, and straw bales placed in staggered tiers on the slope; mulch treatments like dry mulches and hydromulches to prevent the movement of fine sediment through the Bighorn Dolomite;
- Vegetative buffers will be maintained adjacent to intermittent or perennial drainages and wetlands, to the extent possible.
- Soil disturbing activities will be avoided during periods of rain or wet soils.
- Including cross drains and drain dips for mountain biking trails and roads to disperse runoff and erosion.

Through the incorporation of these various PDC, as identified in **Appendix C** in this document, impacts to downstream water and public water systems will be minimized.

There are various impacts to the aquatic influence zone (AIZ) and linear streams documented in the FEIS. These sensitive areas include an unnamed drainage in Rick's Basin, an unnamed drainage in South Bowl, and an unnamed drainage in the southern portion of the existing SUP. Several maintenance and administrative routes are currently located within valley bottoms near AIZ areas, and approved glading and various new ski runs overlap the AIZ. Impacts to the AIZ is nominal in the South Bowl (0.01 acre), a little more intensive in Mono Trees (3.86 acres), and the most intensive in the existing SUP area (66.78 acres). However, through incorporation of proper PDCs and BMPs impacts to the AIZ including wetlands,

fens, and streams will be mitigated. I feel with the incorporation of specific PDC and BMPs, impacts to the AIZ will not cause a significant effect.

Further, concerns about potable water and septic systems for the approved Fred’s Mountain Top Guest Facility were expressed during the DEIS comment period. I recognize this concern and coordinated with project engineers to understand how water and sewer will be handled at the approved facility. Based on discussions with project engineers and GTR, additional text was added and clarified in the FEIS to further describe the potable water and sewer system at this facility. Several additional PDCs were also added to ensure that proper permitting of this facility and for the other guest facilities is completed prior to construction and to minimize impacts on the geohydrology and karst formations below GTR. Please refer to **Appendix C** of this document for more information on the hydrology and geohydrology PDC included in this decision. I believe that through this additional engineering review and by including the various PDCs and BMPs, impacts to downstream water or public water systems will be minimized.

Forest Plan Amendments

All projects must be consistent with the applicable 1997 Forest Plan (16 U.S.C. § 1604(i); 36 CFR § 219.15). If a project is inconsistent with 1997 Forest Plan components, the Responsible Official may amend the plan contemporaneously with the approval of the project or activity so that the project or activity will be consistent with the plan as amended (36 CFR § 219.15(c)(4)).

Scope and Scale of the Amendments

I am authorizing the programmatic amendment to alter the management goals, standards, and guidelines on the 694 acres of NFS lands from Management Prescription 2.1.2 – *Visual Quality Maintenance* and 2.8.3 *Aquatic Influence Zone* to 4.2 – *Special Use Permit Recreation Sites*. The Selected Alternative is inconsistent with goals of Management Prescription 2.1.2 which aims for managing these lands in an environmentally sensitive manner to promote the production of non-commodity resources at varying levels with limited commodity production, for various dispersed recreational opportunities, and to protect natural visual quality and Management Prescription 2.8.3 - *Aquatic Influence Zone* which has a goal to minimize adverse effects to aquatic and riparian dependent species from past, existing and approved management activities. Changing the management prescriptions will bring the Selected Alternative in line with the goals of Management Prescription 4.2 - *Special Use Permit Recreation Sites* to provide for privately operated recreation use, protect and enhance a natural appearing environment to the extent possible while providing for private and group recreation opportunities. Consistent with Management Prescription 4.2 - *Special Use Permit Recreation Sites*, the 694 acres of the SUP boundary expansion will function as a ski area. The requirement to implement the PDC (**Appendix C** of this document) and BMPs will offset anticipated impacts that may arise from this change in management prescriptions. The programmatic amendment is less than a tenth of a percent of the total acres on the CTNF. This amendment will apply to all future projects and activities within this 694-acre area. This programmatic amendment will be in effect for the life of the current Forest Plan.

The portions of the programmatic amendment that occur within Management Prescription 2.8.3 – *Aquatic Influence Zone* overlap with the Management Prescription 2.1.2 and therefore, the total acreage being modified is accounted for in aforementioned acres.

The wildlife project specific Forest Plan amendments are limited to areas where approved project activities overlap areas of resources covered under Forest Plan standards. The Forest Plan standards subject to these project specific amendments include:

1. The size of each American goshawk area
2. Management season for American goshawks

3. Do not allow timber or firewood activities within a 30-acre area around all known flammulated owl active and historic nest sites.
4. Do not allow timber or firewood harvest activities within a 30-acre area around all known boreal owl active and historic territories.
5. Restrict climbing and other human disturbances from March 15 through July 31 to avoid adverse impacts to known falcon nest sites.

The project specific Forest Plan amendments are intended to exempt project specific activities from complying with certain Forest Plan standards. These amendments are only project-specific and are limited to the project area during project construction. These amendments do not apply to future projects in the project area. The programmatic and project specific Forest Plan amendments are described in greater detail in **Appendix C** of the FEIS.

The project specific Forest Plan amendments are justified on the basis that they are geographically limited and do not alter forestwide desired conditions. Based on the analysis conducted in the Wildlife Biological Evaluation as summarized in **Chapter 3 Section 3.13.4** of the FEIS, impacts to the raptor species involved in the project specific Forest Plan amendments are also limited and none exceed, a *May impact individuals or their habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or loss of population viability* determination. Habitat for these species will remain abundant on the CTNF. The project specific Forest Plan amendments will not result in jeopardy, population level impacts, or likely adverse effects with the Selected Alternative.

In conclusion, each amendment has been evaluated for compliance with 36 CFR § 219 and has been determined to be limited in scope, necessary to achieve the benefits of this project, and consistent with maintaining species viability and ecological integrity at the forest scale.

Evaluation of Substantive Requirements

As per 36 CFR § 219.13(b)(5), the Responsible Official shall, “determine which specific substantive requirement(s) within 219.8 through 219.11 are directly related to the plan direction being added, modified, or removed by the amendment and apply such requirement(s) within the scope and scale of the amendment.” To ensure the approved amendments are consistent with the substantive requirements outlined in the 2012 Planning Rule, each proposed modification to the Forest Plan was evaluated against the criteria outlined in 36 CFR § 219.8 through 219.10. The proposed modifications to the Forest Plan will not result in substantial adverse effects to the timber substantive requirements listed under 36 CFR 219.11.

Based on the Project purpose and need, the site-specific conditions for the Project area, and the relevant forest-specific information and data, I have determined that the approved amendments are directly related to the following substantive requirements.

§ 219.8 Sustainability

- § 219.8(a)(1) Ecological Sustainability – Ecosystem Integrity
- Ecological integrity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and watersheds in the project area are adequately protected by existing Forest Plan guidance. The programmatic and project specific Forest Plan amendments will have direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on the ecological integrity of the project area (see FEIS **Sections 3.12 – 3.16**). However, given the limited scope and scale of these impacts at the ecosystem scale, impacts are expected to be negligible.
- § 219.8(a)(2) Ecological Sustainability – Air, Soil, and Water

- Air quality, soils and soil productivity, water quality, and water resources are addressed in the Forest Plan. The programmatic Forest Plan amendment to change the management prescription area may have direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to water resources within the approved SUP expansion areas (see FEIS **Sections 3.14 – 3.16**). However, these impacts will not be significant at the ecosystem scale due to the limited scope and scale of the approved management prescription conversion.
- § 219.8(a)(3) Ecological Sustainability – Riparian Areas
- Ecological integrity of riparian areas is adequately protected in the Forest Plan to reduce resource concerns. The programmatic Forest Plan amendment to change the management prescription area 2.8.3 - *Aquatic Influence Zone* will have direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on riparian areas within the areas approved for conversion (see FEIS **Section 3.16**). However, given specific PDC, and the limited scope and scale of the approved management prescription conversion, these impacts are expected to be minimized and not significant. Also, given the limited scope and scale of the management prescription conversion, the impacts will not be significant.

The amendments will not result in substantial adverse effects to sustainability within the scope of the amendment and is consistent with the sustainability requirements in 36 CFR 219.8.

§ 219.9 Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities

- § 219.9(a) Ecosystem Plan Components
 - Ecosystem plan components to maintain or restore the ecological integrity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and watersheds in the plan area are adequately addressed by existing Forest Plan guidance and project-specific measures are in place to reduce resource concerns. The programmatic Forest Plan amendment to change the management prescription area 2.8.3 - *Aquatic Influence Zone* will have direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and watersheds within the areas approved for management prescription conversion; however, these impacts will not be significant at the ecosystem scale due to the limited scope and scale of the approved management prescription conversion (see FEIS **Sections 3.12 – 3.16**).
- There is no anticipated loss of viability across the Targhee Planning Unit for American goshawk, flammulated owl, boreal owl, or peregrine falcon associated with the wildlife project specific Forest Plan amendments; therefore, the project specific wildlife amendments are not considered a significant change to the 1997 Forest Plan for purposes of the National Forest Management Act (§ 219.13(b)(3), see FEIS **Section 3.13**). The wildlife project specific Forest Plan amendments only apply to this project.
- § 219.9(b) Additional, Species-Specific Plan Components
 - Species-specific plan components are adequately addressed by existing Forest Plan guidance and project specific measures are in place to reduce resource concerns. The programmatic Forest Plan amendment to change the management prescription areas will have direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on plant and animal communities within the areas approved for management prescription conversion; however, these impacts will not be significant at the ecosystem scale due to the limited scope and scale of the approved management prescription conversion (see FEIS **Sections 3.12 – 3.13**).

The amendments will not result in substantial adverse effects to plant and animal communities within the scope of the amendment and is consistent with the requirements for diversity of plant and animal communities in 36 CFR 219.9.

§ 219.10 Multiple Use

- § 219.10(a) Integrated Resource Management for Multiple Use
 - The limited nature of the amendments will have no direct impact on integrated resource management to provide for ecosystem services and multiple uses (see FEIS Sections 3.12 – 3.16).

Summary of 1997 Forest Plan Direction Changes

The specific language amending the 1997 Forest Plan will read as follows:

“694 Acres of NFS lands currently managed under Management Prescription 2.1.2 – *Visual Quality Maintenance* and Management Prescription 2.8.3 - *Aquatic Influence Zone* will be changed to Management Prescription 4.2 – *Special Use Permit Recreation Sites*.” This programmatic amendment changes these Management Prescription Areas for the life of the 1997 Revised Targhee Forest Plan.

Additionally, “The activities authorized under the Selected Alternative will not be subject to the following standards in the 1997 Forest Plan:

1. The size of each American goshawk area
2. Management season for American goshawks
3. Do not allot timber or firewood activities within a 30-acre area around all known flammulated owl active and historic nest sites.
4. Do not allow timber or firewood harvest activities within a 30-acre area around all known boreal owl active and historic territories.
5. Restrict climbing and other human disturbances from March 15 through July 31 to avoid adverse impacts to known falcon nest sites.

These exemptions are only valid during construction of the authorized activities. All subsequent projects and activities within the project area will be subject to these Forest Plan standards.”

Public Involvement

An initial 30-day scoping period began on August 26, 2020, when the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register. The scoping period was subsequently extended to 45 days to account for difficulties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the large volume of project materials. A scoping package, including a scoping notice identifying the Proposed Action and the corresponding Purpose and Need, was also prepared, proposed, and sent to a list of individuals, organizations, and agencies. A legal notice was also published in the CTNF newspaper of record, the *Idaho Falls Post Register*. During the 45-day scoping period, there was targeted outreach to specific stakeholders to gather input and answer questions on the project. Two web-based public scoping meetings were held via Microsoft Live Events on September 8 and September 10, 2020, to further inform the public of the projects identified in the scoping notice (virtual public scoping meetings were conducted rather than in-person meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic). In addition, the public had ample access to project details through an interactive ArcGIS Story Map and project specific website that was created in addition to the CTNF’s [project website](#).

Scoping comments were accepted through mail, fax, telephone, email, and through the CTNF’s [project website](#). In total, 387 comment letters were received. From these comments, 1,338 substantive comments were extracted and categorized into the major themes expressed by commenters. These themes were

reviewed in subsequent Interdisciplinary Team meetings (on November 23 and December 11, 2020) and were used to inform additional alternatives to the Proposed Action. These alternatives as well as alternatives considered by dismissed from detailed analysis, are detailed in **Chapter 2** of the FEIS. The resource issues are discussed further in **Chapter 3** in the FEIS.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIS was published in the Federal Register on March 21, 2025. This publication of the Legal Notice in the Newspaper of Record the Post Register initiated a 90-day public comment period on the DEIS. Comments on the DEIS were received until June 20, 2025. During this 90-day comment period one public open house meeting was held at the Driggs City Center on April 17, 2025, to further inform the public of the publication of the DEIS and the analyses that were completed. Additional information was available on the CTNF [project website](#). Comments were accepted from the following sources: email, web submission, and mailed in letters. From the 90-day comment period, 1,341 unique comment letters were received, which included 544 form letters. From these unique comments and form letters, a total of 2,167 substantive comments were extracted. These substantive comments were then responded to in **Appendix E** of the FEIS and edits to the DEIS or associated technical reports were completed based on the information the substantive comments presented. Please refer to **Appendix E** of the FEIS for more information.

Consultation With Government Agencies and Tribes

The Forest Service consulted the following Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies during the development of this EIS. A complete list of agencies and organizations that commented during the NEPA process can be found in **Section 4.3** of the FEIS.

Tribal Consultation

Coordination and consultation with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes has been ongoing throughout this project. In Staff-to-Staff meetings on October 31, 2023, May 9, 2024, May 6, 2025, and April 9, 2026, the Caribou-Targhee National Forest presented this project as part of the annual program of work discussion. A Tribal Scoping Letter was sent to the Chairman and Tribal Staff seeking project specific comments on March 3, 2021, and March 18, 2025. The results of this coordination are filed in the project record.

Other Agency Consultation

The Forest Service is in consultation with the following federal and state agencies and local government entities:

Federal Agencies	State Agencies	Local Government & Agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Fish and Wildlife Service • United States Army Corps of Engineers • Environmental Protection Agency • National Park Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wyoming Department of Transportation • Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office • Wyoming Department of Natural Resources • Wyoming Pollution Control Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teton County, ID • Teton County, WY • Teton Conservation District • City of Alta

Consideration of Other Alternatives

The alternatives analyzed are discussed in detail in **Chapter 2** of the FEIS. A summary of each alternative is provided below. The primary difference between alternatives considered in detail are the types and number of improvements to the ski area and the expanded SUP boundaries.

It is important to note that additional alternatives were considered in the EIS process but were eliminated from detailed analysis (see **Section 2.5** of the FEIS). Most of these alternatives were eliminated because they did not meet the purpose and need for action or were not feasible. Many of these involved the removal or modification of elements that are integral to the overall project.

Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action alternative essentially reflects the continuation of existing management practices without changes, additions, or upgrades. Under the No Action alternative, none of these projects described below will be implemented.

Alternative 2 - The Proposed Action

These projects include an expansion of the existing GTR SUP boundary, several lift replacements, realignments, and additions, terrain improvements, and the addition of guest services facilities to improve the guest experience. In short, an 866-acre SUP will be authorized on NFS lands. The SUP area will be divided into two noncontiguous areas: a 266-acre expansion into the South Bowl area, southwest to the existing SUP area, and a 600-acre expansion into the Mono Trees area, southeast to the existing SUP area. Ski terrain in the form of cleared slopes and lift infrastructure. Alternative 2 includes the following elements:

- 266-acre expansion of the SUP into South Bowl;
- 600-acre expansion of the SUP into Mono Trees;
- Development of 60 acres of traditional terrain in the South Bowl SUP;
- Development of 97 acres of traditional terrain in the Mono Trees SUP;
- Construction of both the South Bowl and Mono Trees Lifts;
- Construction of a guest facility at the top and bottom terminal of the South Bowl Lift;
- Construction of a guest facility at Lightning Ridge in the top terminal of the Mono Trees Lift;
- Implementation of two avalaunchers in the South Bowl SUP area;
- Construction of two construction, access, and maintenance administrative routes within the proposed SUP areas; and
- Various projects within the existing SUP including replacing two lifts; constructing four new lifts; developing 214 acres of traditional terrain; developing 550 acres of gladed terrain; implementation of 57 acres of snowmaking; implementation of road construction, reclamation, and improvements; installation of a snowmobile rescue catch; construction of four new guest service facilities including storage facilities and vault toilets; construction of a snow tubing facility; construction of Nordic, snowshoes, and fat biking trails; construction of 29 miles of mountain bike trails; and implementation of a various summer activities in the summer activity zone.

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 excludes any proposed expansion of the SUP, and only includes projects within the existing SUP area. More specifically, under Alternative 3, there will be no expansion of the SUP into the South Bowl or Mono Trees area, meaning no programmatic amendment of the 1997 Forest Plan Management Prescriptions will be needed under this alternative. Project components included in Alternative 3 include:

- Constructing the new Crazy Horse and North Boundary Lifts; upgrading the Dreamcatcher and Shoshone Lifts, and constructing the new Palmer Platter Surface Lift and Lights along with the new teaching carpet;
- Implementing 107 acres of new traditional terrain, 107 acres of terrain improvements, 204 acres of proposed glades, and 45 acres of groomable glades;
- Road construction, reclamation, and improvements, including eliminating steep and no longer necessary on-mountain access roads, and constructing new roads to bypass steep grades and improve mountain circulation and maintenance;
- Installation of 57 acres of snowmaking to improve lower-mountain circulation routes;
- Construction of full-service on-mountain guest services facilities at the summit of Fred’s Mountain and at the top terminal of the Sacajawea Lift, a facility at the top of the Shoshone Lift, two on-mountain guest facilities in Rick’s Basin and at the top of Lightning Ridge, and two storage and vault toilet facilities at the base of the North Boundary and Blackfoot Lifts;
- Constructing 29 miles of downhill biking, hiking and multi-use trails;
- Constructing a canopy tour/fly line, zip line, aerial adventure course, and disc golf course in the summer activity zone near the Shoshone Lift; and
- Constructing snow tubing facilities, and expansion and improvement of Nordic, snowshoeing and fat biking offerings.

Alternative 4

Alternative 4 includes all projects proposed within the existing SUP, along with all projects proposed in the South Bowl SUP expansion. This will result in a 266-acre SUP expansion into South Bowl. Project elements proposed under Alternative 4 include:

- 266-acre expansion of the SUP into South Bowl;
- Development of 60 acres of traditional terrain in the South Bowl SUP;
- Construction of the South Bowl Lift;
- Construction of a guest facility at the top and bottom terminal of the South Bowl Lift;
- Implementation of two avalaunchers in the South Bowl SUP area;
- Construction of two construction, access, and maintenance administrative routes within the proposed SUP areas; and
- Various projects within the existing SUP including replacing two lifts; constructing four new lifts; developing 214 acres of traditional terrain; developing 550 acres of gladed terrain; implementation of 57 acres of snowmaking; implementation of road construction, reclamation, and improvements; installation of a snowmobile rescue catch; construction of four new guest service facilities

including storage facilities and vault toilets; construction of a snow tubing facility; construction of Nordic, snowshoes, and fat biking trails; construction of 29 miles of mountain bike trails; and implementation of a various summer activities in the summer activity zone.

Alternative 5

Alternative 5 only includes the proposed Mono Trees SUP expansion. This will be a 600-acre SUP expansion. Specifically, the project elements included in Alternative are:

- 600-acre expansion of the SUP into Mono Trees;
- Development of 97 acres of traditional terrain in the Mono Trees SUP;
- Construction of the Mono Trees Lift;
- Construction of a guest facility at Lightning Ridge in the top terminal of the Mono Trees Lift;
- Construction of two construction, access, and maintenance administrative routes within the proposed SUP areas; and
- Various projects within the existing SUP including replacing two lifts; constructing four new lifts; developing 214 acres of traditional terrain; developing 550 acres of gladed terrain; implementation of 57 acres of snowmaking; implementation of road construction, reclamation, and improvements; installation of a snowmobile rescue catch; construction of four new guest service facilities including storage facilities and vault toilets; construction of a snow tubing facility; construction of Nordic, snowshoes, and fat biking trails; construction of 29 miles of mountain bike trails; and implementation of a various summer activities in the summer activity zone.

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

The following design options were identified through internal and external scoping and considered by the ID Team, but ultimately eliminated from further analysis:

- South Bowl SUP expansion with three chairlifts;
- South Bowl SUP expansion without chairlifts;
- South Bowl interim cat-skiing;
- Alternatives responding to community drinking water quality concerns raised during scoping;
- Alternatives without on-mountain facilities; and
- A T-Bar lift between Dreamcatcher and Sacajawea; a mid-station for Dreamcatcher Lift; an on-mountain restaurant near the top terminal of the Shoshone Lift; an alternative that includes no new terrain or capacity increase; a replacement of Sacajawea with a six-pack gondola; a connecting lift from the base area to Sacajawea; and a lift to the top of *Wandering Moose* trail.

A description of each alternative can be found in the FEIS document (**Sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, and 2.2.5**).

Findings Required by Law, Regulation, and Agency Policy

The DEIS was prepared prior to March 2025 under NEPA regulations 36 CFR § 220 and therefore the FEIS was also prepared under these regulations. Effective April 11, 2025, the White House Council on Environmental Quality removed its regulations for implementing NEPA 90 Fed. Reg. 10,610 (Feb. 25, 2025). On May 29, 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County*, No. 23-975. The Supreme Court ruled that a federal agency’s focus under NEPA “is ‘the proposed action’ – that is, the project at hand.” The Supreme Court stated that agencies “are not required to analyze the effects of projects over which they do not exercise regulatory authority,” and that NEPA does not “require the agency to speculate about the effects” that are “outside its regulatory jurisdiction.”

As a result of the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County*, the FEIS contains substantially more analysis than is now required under NEPA as it includes analysis of socioeconomic and other off-site issues that are not “the project at hand” or that are not located on NFS lands and are therefore “outside of the regulatory jurisdiction” of the Forest Service. Although analysis of those issues is not required by NEPA, the Forest Service chose to disclose the analysis of them in the EIS. This decision is based on the “project at hand” as framed by the Supreme Court, and is not based on issues outside the Forest Service’s regulatory jurisdiction.

This approval is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan’s long-term goals and objectives. One programmatic and five project specific Forest Plan amendments are approved and are permissible under the National Forest Management Act. The project was designed in conformance with Forest Plan forestwide management direction and incorporates appropriate Forest Plan guidance for ski areas—existing and potential.

As Forest Supervisor for the CTNF, I am required to manage the Forest in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. This authority, which includes approval of ski area projects, is delegated to me through agency policy described in Forest Service Manual 1200. In reviewing the FEIS, I have concluded that my decision is consistent with all relevant laws, regulations and requirements. This includes but is not limited to:

- **Clean Air Act of 1990, as amended:** The *Clean Air Act, as amended*, is the comprehensive federal law that regulates that the FEIS evaluates air quality conditions and potential emissions associated with construction and operations, including consistency with National Ambient Air Quality Standards and applicable state standards. Air quality is analyzed in **Chapter 3, Section 3.10** of the FEIS including direct, indirect, and cumulative emissions impacts and mitigation measures. This analysis is supported by detailed technical reporting specific to air quality, which is available on the project website (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/caribou-targhee/projects/58258>). This demonstrates compliance by disclosing impacts and ensuring the project will not cause or contribute to violations of applicable air quality standards.
- **Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended:** Section 303 (d) of the *Clean Water Act* establishes a non-degradation policy for all federally proposed projects. The objective of the act is to restore and maintain chemical, physical, and biological integrity of all waters of the US in order to protect their beneficial uses – in this case, those assigned by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. Beneficial uses reflect resources or activities that will be directly affected by a change in water quality or quantity.

The FEIS analyzes hydrology, wetlands, and aquatic resources, including potential impacts to surface waters, riparian areas, and aquatic influence zones. It identifies PDCs and BMPs to minimize erosion, sedimentation, and pollutant discharge, consistent with Clean Water Act objectives. Compliance is achieved through impact disclosure, avoidance/minimization measures, and continued coordination with United States Army Corps of Engineers permitting processes. **Chapter 3, Sections 15 and 16** of the FEIS are most relevant to the Clean Water Act. Additionally, the FEIS analysis is supported by detailed technical reporting specific to hydrology and wetlands, which is available on the project website (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/caribou-targhee/projects/58258>).

- **Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, including the initiation of formal consultation to receive a Biological Opinion:** The FEIS identifies threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive species with potential to be impacted by the projects and evaluates project effects on these species and their habitats. The wildlife section of the FEIS (**Chapter 3, Section 3.13**) supports formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as it is based on a Biological Assessment that was prepared specifically for the project. The Biological Assessment prepared for this project is available on the project website (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/caribou-targhee/projects/58258>). Formal consultation for this project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was initiated on May 20, 2026. Concurrence and a Biological Opinion from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be required prior to project implementation. Compliance with the Endangered Species Act is achieved by analyzing effects, incorporating conservation measures, and adhering to Section 7 consultation requirements, all of which were done throughout this process.
- **Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management:** The FEIS (**Section 3.15**) evaluates hydrologic conditions and potential impacts to floodplains and drainage systems, including changes in runoff and hydrologic disturbance. PDC and BMPs are incorporated to avoid or minimize floodplain impacts and maintain natural floodplain functions. This ensures compliance with EO 11988 by avoiding adverse effects and reducing flood risks.
- **Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands:** Wetlands and riparian areas are specifically analyzed in the FEIS (**Section 3.16**), including identification, functional assessment, and impact quantification. The analysis includes avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures in the form of PDC and BMPs to protect wetland values and functions. Compliance is demonstrated through detailed evaluation and incorporation of PDC consistent with EO 11990. The FEIS and wetland technical report provide additional information regarding wetlands for the project. The report is available on the project website (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/caribou-targhee/projects/58258>).
- **Executive Order 13112 Invasive Species:** The FEIS addresses noxious weeds and invasive species within the vegetation analysis (**Section 3.12**) and identifies management strategies such as early detection and rapid response. The analysis in the FEIS is based on a noxious weeds assessment prepared specifically for this project, which is available on the project website (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/caribou-targhee/projects/58258>). PDC include measures to prevent introduction and spread during construction and operations. This satisfies EO 13112 by integrating invasive species prevention and control into project planning.
- **EO 13007 – Indian Sacred Sites:** As described above, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes were contacted and updated as this project progressed. The FEIS (**Section 3.6**) includes analysis of cultural resources and incorporates consultation with Tribes to identify and protect culturally significant sites, including potential sacred sites. Avoidance and protection measures are applied where resources are identified. Compliance is achieved through consultation and consideration of effects on sites of religious or cultural importance.

- **EO 13175 – Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments:** Consultation and coordination with tribal governments during project development is summarized above. The FEIS reflects tribal input and considers potential impacts to tribal interests and resources. This demonstrates compliance by ensuring meaningful government-to-government consultation. Government to government meetings between the CTNF and tribes occurred throughout the NEPA process.
- **EO 13443 – Facilitation of Hunting, Heritage, and Wildlife Conservation:** The FEIS evaluates wildlife habitat and recreational uses, including how the project may influence hunting and wildlife-related recreation. It considers habitat changes and incorporates mitigation to sustain wildlife populations. Compliance is achieved by ensuring that project actions are consistent with maintaining wildlife conservation and associated recreational opportunities.
- **Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended:** The project will meet the intent stated in the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order 13186*. The Biological Evaluation contains the identified species to be considered. As previously mentioned, the FEIS analyzes wildlife, including migratory birds, and evaluates habitat impacts and disturbance effects. PDC (e.g., timing restrictions) are included to avoid impacts during critical nesting periods. Compliance is demonstrated through avoidance and minimization of take consistent with Migratory Bird Treaty Act requirements. Migratory birds are analyzed in detail in the Biological Evaluation prepared for this project that is available on the project website (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/caribou-targhee/projects/58258>).
- **National Environmental Policy Act of 1969:** as amended: NEPA establishes the format and content requirements of environmental analysis and documentation as well as requirements for public involvement and disclosure. This FEIS was prepared according to the requirements of NEPA as well as the Council on Environmental Quality regulations and Forest Service regulations regarding its implementation and therefore complies with NEPA.
- **National Forest Management Planning Act of 1976:** *The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976, an amendment to the Forests and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974*, establishes standards for how the Forest Service manages the national forests, requires the development of land management plans for national forests and grasslands (Forest Plans), and directs the Forest Service to develop regular reports on the status and trends of the nation's renewable resources on all forests and rangelands.

The FEIS evaluates consistency with the Forest Plan (**Appendix B** of the FEIS) and includes Forest Plan amendments (**Appendix C** of the FEIS) analyzed under 36 CFR 219. Compliance is achieved by demonstrating that the project is either consistent with or appropriately amends Forest Plan direction when necessary.

- **National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended:** Cultural resources are analyzed in the FEIS, including identification of historic properties and evaluation of effects within the Area of Potential Effects (APE). Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer was completed on March 6, 2024. Compliance is achieved through Section 106 review and incorporation of avoidance or mitigation measures within the project design and PDC. A cultural technical report was prepared specifically for this project; however, it is not available to the general public due to sensitive information about tribally important resources.

Administrative Review or Objection Opportunities

This decision is subject to two different objection review processes: one for the programmatic Forest Plan amendment (36 CFR Part 219) and the other for the project activities and project specific Forest Plan amendments (36 CFR Part 218). These processes are described below, as applicable.

The programmatic Forest Plan amendment applies to all future projects or activities within the 694-acre SUP boundary expansion; therefore, the 2012 Planning Rule's objection process applies, but only to the programmatic plan amendment (i.e., the management area change). Under the 2012 Planning Rule at 36 CFR § 219.51, a plan amendment is not subject to objection when the Responsible Official receives no substantive formal comments on the proposal during the opportunities for public comment. However, substantive comments related to the Forest Plan amendments were received during the DEIS comment period, so therefore the programmatic Forest Plan amendment is subject to objection.

The approved project and project specific Forest Plan amendments are also subject to the pre-decisional objection process pursuant to 36 CFR Part 218, subparts A and B. Objections will only be accepted from those who have previously submitted specific written comments regarding the approved project and/or project specific Forest Plan amendments during scoping or the DEIS public review and comment period, in accordance with 36 CFR § 218.5(a). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted, timely and specific written comments regarding the approved project and/or project specific Forest Plan amendments unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

Incorporation of documents by reference is not allowed, except for the following items that may be referenced by including date, page, and section of the cited document, along with a description of its content and applicability to the objection: 1) All or any part of a Federal law or regulation; 2) Forest Service directives and land management plans; and/or 3) Documents referenced by the Forest Service in the approved project environmental analysis document that is subject to objection. All other documents must be included with the objection.

At a minimum, an objection must include the following: objector's name and physical mailing address; signature or other verification of authorship upon request; identification of the lead objector when multiple names are listed; name of the approved project; name and title of Responsible Official; and name of national forest unit(s) on which the project will be implemented (36 CFR § 218.8(d)).

Objections, including attachments, must be submitted in a format such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Microsoft Word (.doc) and filed via:

- Online: <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=58258>
- Mail: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays to: USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region, Attn: Objection Reviewing Officer, Hansen Federal Building, Room 4016, 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401

Objections for the programmatic Forest Plan amendment must be submitted within 60 calendar days and for project activities and/or project specific Forest Plan amendments within 45 calendar days following the publication of the Legal Notice in the *Post Register*. The publication date in the Legal Notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the time to file an objection.

It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the Reviewing Officer pursuant to 36 CFR § 218.9, which includes: date of submittal to online CARA database; date of U.S. Postal Service postmark or shipping date for delivery by private carrier for an objection received before

the close of the fifth business day after the objection filing period; agency’s electronically generated date and time for email; or official agency date stamp showing receipt of hand delivery. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process.

Implementation

If no objection is filed on the project, a Final ROD may be issued on, but not before, the fifth business day following the close of the objection filing period (36 CFR § 218.21). If an objection to this decision is filed in accordance with 36 CFR § 218 or 36 CFR § 219, then this ROD may not be signed until all concerns and instructions from the Reviewing Officer in the objection response have been addressed (36 CFR 218.12 (b)). After the decision is signed, implementation may begin immediately.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this Record of Decision, the FEIS, or the Forest Service pre-decisional objection process, contact:

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 Caribou-Targhee National Forest
 1670 N Hwy 33 Suite 100
 Driggs, ID 83422
jay.pence@usda.gov
 208-354-2312

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In-Text Citation	Full Reference
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Teton Range Bighorn Sheep Working Group 2020	Teton Range Bighorn Sheep Working Group. 2020 Teton Range Bighorn Sheep Herd Situation Assessment.
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USDA Forest Service 2014b	USDA Forest Service. 2014. FSH 2509.19 National Best Management Practices Chapter 20 National Best Management Practices Implementation and Chapter 30 National Best Management Practices Monitoring. Available at: USDA Forest Service. 2014. FSH 2509.19 National Best Management Practices Chapter 10 National Core Best Management Practices.

	Available at: https://www.fs.usda.gov/naturalresources/watershed/pubs/Draft_FSH_2509_19.pdf
USFWS 2016	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2016. Conservation Strategy for the Grizzly Bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Appendix A – Selected Alternative Figures

Please refer to the next page for the Selected Alternative Figures.

Figure 1. Approved Boundary Expansion & Forest Plan Management Prescriptions

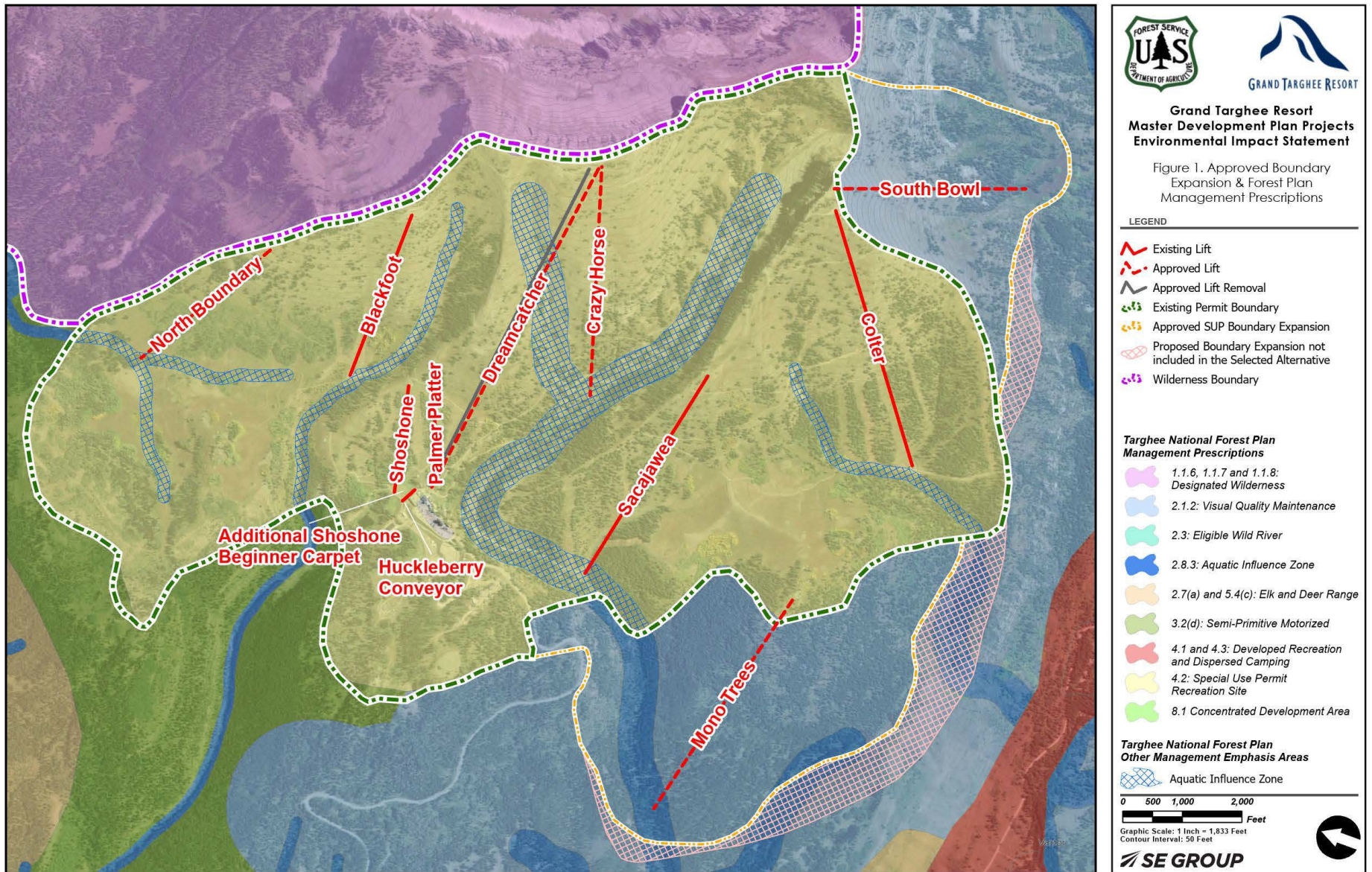


Figure 2. Selected Alternative Winter Projects



Figure 3. Selected Alternative Summer Projects

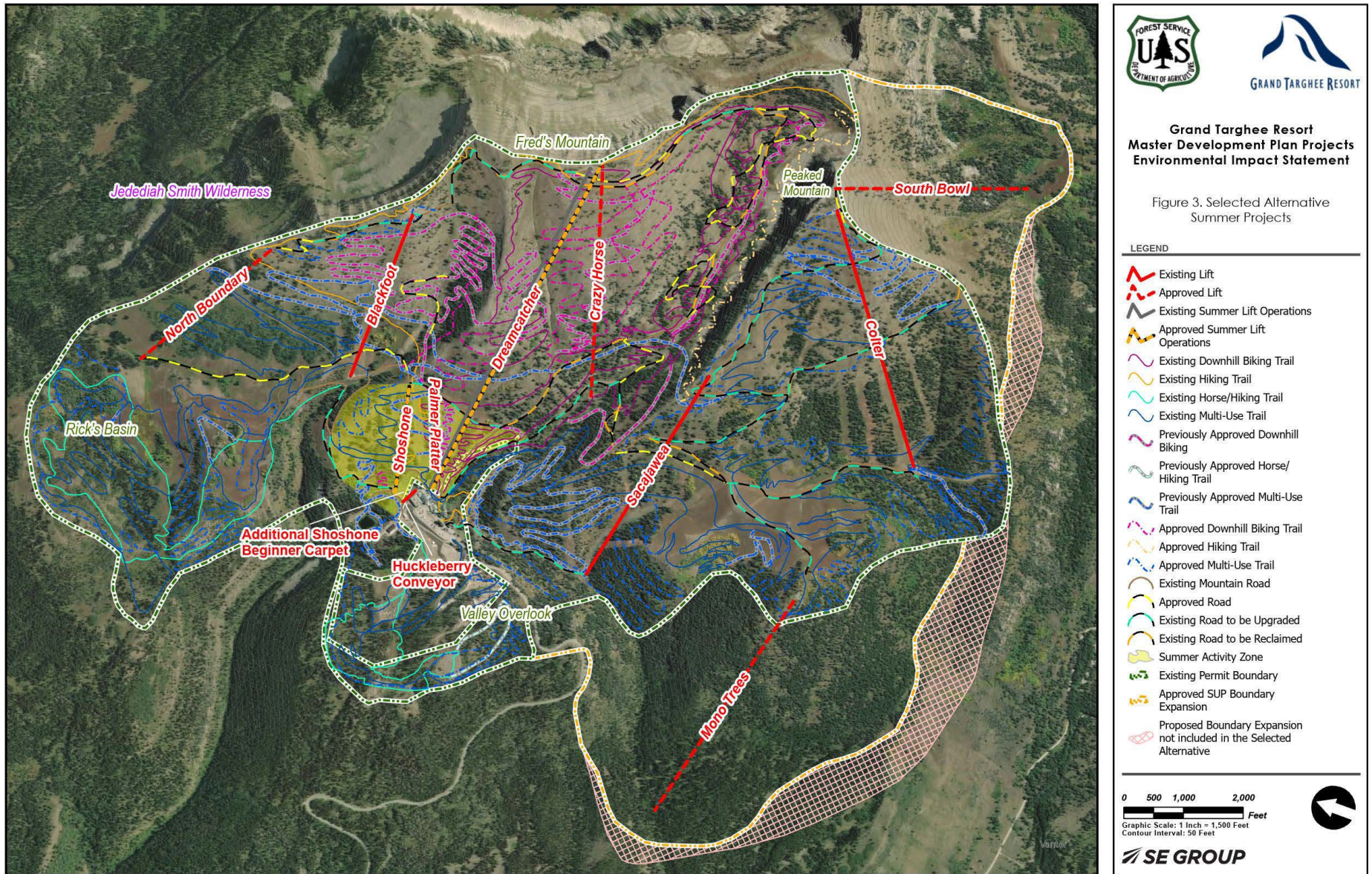
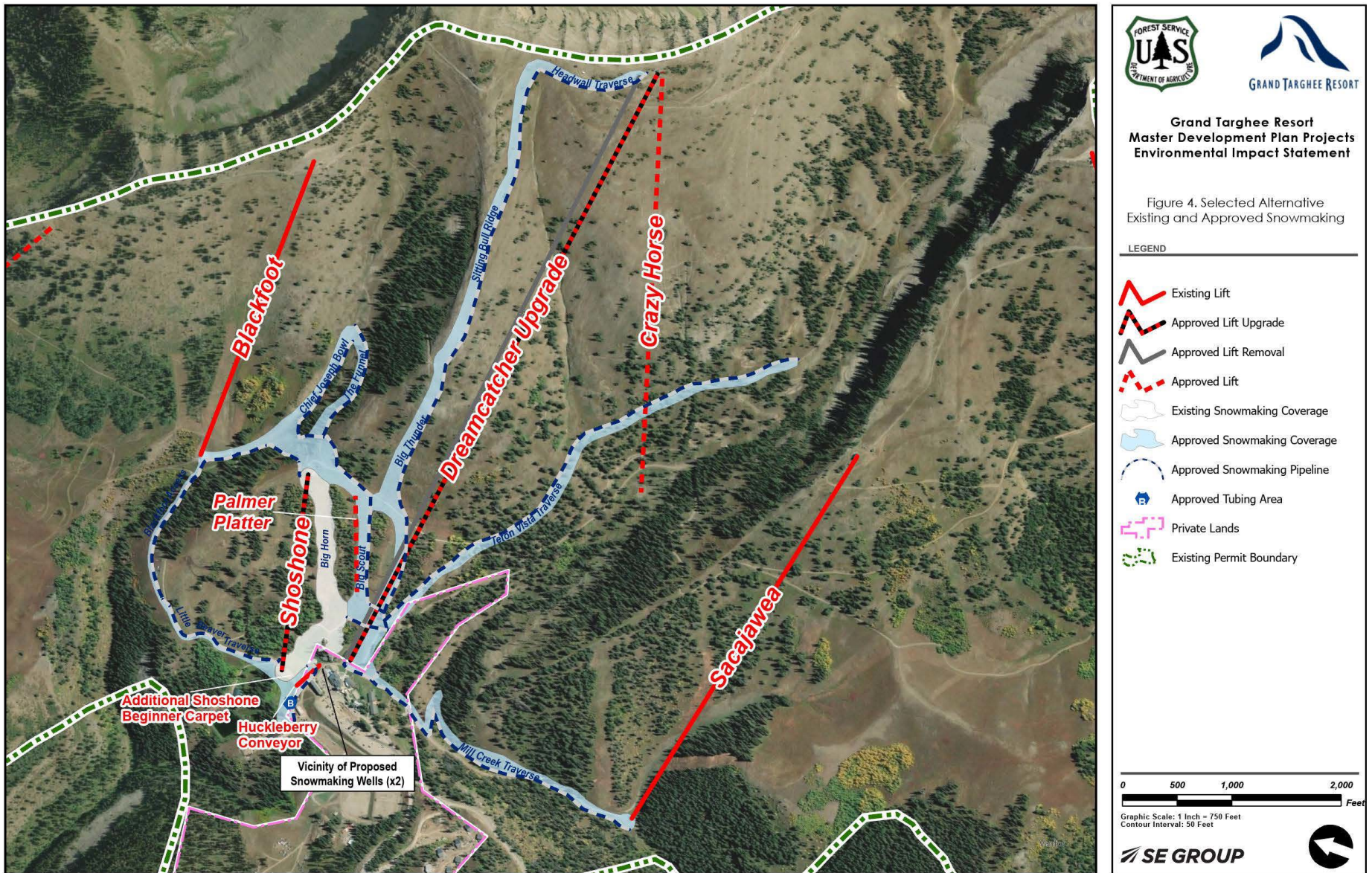


Figure 4. Selected Alternative Existing and Approved Snowmaking



Appendix B – Selected Alternative Description

The Selected Alternative includes an expansion of the existing GTR SUP boundary, several lift replacements, realignments, and additions, terrain improvements, and the addition of guest services facilities to improve the guest experience. The projects in the Selected Alternative will result in disturbance from tree clearing, grading, glading, and selective tree clearing. Activities relevant to each project component that will result in disturbance are described in subsequent sections and a breakdown of disturbance areas by project component is provided in **Table B-1**.

Table B-1. Projected Disturbance Under the Approved Action

Project Component	Type of Disturbance	Acres
Alternative Winter Activities	Grading	1.9
	Grading and Tree Clearing	3.7
Guest Service Facilities	Grading	2.1
	Grading and Tree Clearing	0.6
Lifts	Grading	19.5
	Grading and Tree Clearing	13.7
Administrative Route Construction, Reclamation, and Improvement	Grading	36.8
	Grading and Tree Clearing	23.9
Snowmaking	Grading	15.7
	Grading and Tree Clearing	5.8
Summer Activities	Grading	63.9
	Grading and Tree Clearing	56.6
Terrain Development, Glading, Grading	Glading*	475.2
	Grading	25.3
	Grading and Tree Clearing	32.1
	Groomable Glades	40.7
	Tree Clearing	118.2
Avalanche Mitigation Infrastructure	Grading	< 0.1
	Grading and Tree Clearing	< 0.1

*Glading consists of the partial removal of trees (specifically between 10 and 40 percent of a stand), to increase spacing providing the opportunity to ski or ride through the forest. Unlike traditional trail construction, this activity does not involve clear-cutting or ground grading, meaning the underlying soil remains largely undisturbed and the area retains its forested character. Specific volumes of cut timber will be dependent on the standing timber present during implementation. Although specific volumes of cut timber cannot be specified, glading projects typically consist of the removal of smaller diameter trees (under 8 inches in diameter) as well as hazard trees which ski areas operating under a SUP FS-2700-5B are authorized to cut.

Special Use Permit/Operational Boundary Expansions

South Bowl Area

Terrain

GTR is approved to expand its existing SUP boundary into the “South Bowl” area adjacent to Peaked Mountain, which will add 235 acres to the resort’s permitted area (refer to **Figure 1**). In addition to naturally occurring undeveloped terrain that will become part of the SUP area under this approval, GTR is approved to construct developed ski runs in the South Bowl area (see SB-01 to SB-8 in **Figure 2**). In total, developed ski runs will account for approximately 60 acres of the 235-acre South Bowl area that GTR is approved to incorporate into its SUP boundary. The approved developed trails in the South Bowl area will all be constructed to provide well-defined and smooth skiable surfaces through a combination of grading and tree clearing practices. As such, heavy machinery will be required in certain circumstances to achieve the desired surface. The South Bowl itself is an open, steep bowl on the southside of Peaked Mountain, and GTR intends to maintain its open bowl feel as much as possible. These natural conditions in the South Bowl area will provide unique terrain variety for higher ability level guests within undeveloped portions of the 235-acre expansion area without additional modification.

South Bowl Lift

To serve the terrain in the South Bowl area, GTR is approved for the construction of the South Bowl Lift. This lift will be 3,211 feet long and have a capacity of approximately 1,800 persons per hour. It will provide lift service skiing and riding to the South Bowl area and serve as the connection for guests to return to Peaked Mountain and the base area. The lift is planned as a top drive lift, which will reduce the construction and maintenance access needs of the bottom terminal. To accommodate the lift towers, some grading and tree clearing will be required along the lift line, and grading and tree clearing will be required to create space for the lift terminals and skier egress. Fiber and electricity lines to the top lift terminal of this lift will be provided via an extension of the Colter lines, and communications and fiber lines will be buried along the lift line.

Facilities

GTR is approved to construct facilities at the top and bottom of the South Bowl Lift. The facility at the top terminal will be a ski patrol facility to provide patrol access into the South Bowl area to ensure timely responses to potential accidents in the area and facilitate operations in this approved area. There is an existing ski patrol facility at the top of the existing Colter Lift; however, given the location of this facility down ridge from the top terminal of the South Bowl Lift and the terrain it serves, there is a need for an additional ski patrol facility to provide for timely ski patrol response, operations, and ultimately public safety. The existing Peaked Mountain administrative route and its approved extension will provide construction and maintenance access to this facility. The facility at the bottom terminal will be a vault toilet restroom as there are no other restroom facilities between the South Bowl and Sacajawea Lifts. This facility will be accessed by the approved cat/construction maintenance access route to the base of South Bowl, which will be capable of accommodating a pick-up truck with pumping/maintenance capabilities in the summer months.

Access

Construction and maintenance access to the South Bowl area and to the top of the South Bowl Lift will be provided via an upgraded administrative route to the top of the Colter Lift. GTR also is approved to construct a cat/construction and maintenance route that will provide access to the base of the South Bowl Lift. The route will be approximately 1.5 miles long. This route will provide snowcat access to the bottom terminal in winter months, serving as an option in emergency or lift closure scenarios. In the summer months, this route will be capable of accommodating maintenance vehicles such as UTVs and/or pick-up trucks.

Public Safety

In an effort to mitigate avalanche risk and address public safety in the South Bowl area, GTR is approved to construct a ski patrol facility and install two avalaunchers, and a bomb cache in South Bowl, depicted in **Figure 2**. Operational measures like ropelines, backcountry access points, etc., will be documented in an Operational and Boundary Management Plan (refer to **Table C-1. Project Design Criteria** for more information). The ski patrol facility is described under the *Facilities* header above. Both avalaunchers will be located to the east of the bottom lift terminal.

Mono Trees Area

Terrain

In addition to the approved South Bowl area, GTR is approved to expand its existing SUP boundary to the west to include the Mono Trees area, adding approximately 459 acres to the resort's permitted area (refer to **Figure 1**). Within this area, GTR is approved to construct approximately 97 acres of intermediate and advanced-intermediate trails to provide developed skiing opportunities in the Mono Trees area. Similar to South Bowl, inclusion of Mono Trees into the SUP expansion area will also result in the incorporation of undeveloped, skiable terrain, into the overall GTR terrain network. The undeveloped terrain that will become accessible in the approved Mono Trees area is primarily characterized by glades and open meadows. Since the Mono Trees area is currently forested, terrain projects will require tree clearing to accommodate trails and glading to accommodate gladed areas. Grading will also be required to provide favorable ski slope angles.

Mono Trees Lift

To serve the terrain in the Mono Trees area, GTR also is approved to construct the construction of the Mono Trees Lift, a chairlift 4,222 feet long with a capacity of 1,800 persons per hour. This lift will provide a quality skiing experience on the slopes of Lightning Peak during periods when the upper mountain experiences poor visibility, high winds, or other weather factors. A similar lift in the Lightning Ridge area was approved for construction in the 1994 ROD with a north-south alignment.

Electricity to the approved lift will be provided to the bottom terminal from the bottom of the Sacajawea Lift in a catwalk and to the top terminal from the approved line supplying electricity to the bottom of the Colter Lift, buried in the approved administrative route connecting the two lifts. Communications and fiber lines will be buried along the lift line and fiber will be routed from the Dreamweaver trail along a approved administrative route. A chair storage facility is approved at the top of the lift. Grading and tree clearing will be required to accommodate new lift towers and terminals. An Operations and Boundary Plan will be created prior to lift operations within the Mono Trees pod (refer to **Table C-1. Project Design Criteria** for more information).

Lightning Ridge Guest Facility

To accompany the Mono Trees Lift and associated terrain, GTR is approved to construct a guest facility on Lightning Ridge, at the top of the Mono Trees Lift. The facility will offer limited food service (i.e., outdoor grill and cold sandwiches, snacks, beverages, etc.), a wood stove, and a vault toilet. Its primary purpose will be to provide a warm area for guests coming off the mountain. It will be approximately 1,500 square feet. This facility will only be constructed if the associated Mono Trees projects are approved. This facility may also provide support ski patrol operations (e.g., storage) but that will not be its primary function.

Access

To provide access into the Mono Trees area, two administrative routes totaling approximately 0.9 mile will be constructed (refer to **Figure 5**). One will provide access from the bottom of the Sacajawea Lift, within the existing SUP boundary, to the bottom of the Mono Trees Lift, outside of the existing SUP boundary. The other administrative route will provide access from the Lightning Ridge guest facility to the top of the Mono Trees Lift. This administrative route will be entirely within the existing SUP area but will only be constructed if the Mono Trees area were approved. In total, 2.5 miles of administrative routes will be constructed to provide access to the two SUP expansion areas. Grading and tree clearing will be required for construction of the access administrative routes into Mono Trees.

1997 Forest Plan Amendments

A programmatic amendment to the *1997 Forest Plan* will be required to accommodate the approved South Bowl and Mono Trees areas located outside of GTR's existing SUP boundary on land that is currently designated as Management Prescription 2.1.2 – *Visual Quality Maintenance* and Management Prescription 2.8.3 – *Aquatic Influence Zone*. The development of this ski terrain will require that the *1997 Forest Plan* be amended to incorporate these two areas into the GTR SUP boundary and will result in the conversion of approximately 694 acres from Management Prescription 2.1.2 – *Visual Quality Maintenance* and Management Prescription 2.8.3 – *Aquatic Influence Zone* to Management Prescription 4.2 – *Special Use Authorization Recreation Sites*. Per the *1997 Forest Plan*, the Management Prescription 2.8.3 - *Aquatic Influence Zone* Management Prescription overlaps other Management Prescription areas, therefore the 125 acres are accounted for in the 694 acres of Management Prescription 2.1.2 - *Visual Quality Maintenance* being converted to Management Prescription 4.2 - *Special Use Permit Recreation Sites*. No portion of the approved SUP expansion will occur in areas classified as designated wilderness (Management Prescriptions 1.1.6 – *Designated Wilderness – Opportunity Class I*, 1.1.7 – *Designated Wilderness – Opportunity Class II*, and 1.1.8 – *Designated Wilderness – Opportunity Class III*). Refer to **Figure 1** for a depiction of the approved boundary expansion and *1997 Forest Plan* Management Prescriptions.

Additional amendments, driven by resource impacts associated with various project components of the Selected Alternative, are described in the corresponding resource sections within **Chapter 3** of the FEIS. These approved amendments are project specific, and will amend the *1997 Forest Plan* to exempt the approved projects from certain resource standards. The aforementioned project specific *1997 Forest Plan* amendments are related to wildlife habitat and are described in detail in **Section 3.13** of the FEIS. **Appendix B** of the FEIS contains a full *1997 Forest Plan* consistency analysis. **Appendix C** and **Section 1.9.1 – Targhee National Forest Revised Forest Plan** of the FEIS describes the *1997 Forest Plan* amendments themselves.

Lifts, Lift Replacements and Realignment (within the Existing SUP Area)

The lifts described in the following paragraphs are approved in addition to the lifts included in South Bowl and Mono Tree areas (discussed in previous section) and are located within the existing SUP area (refer to **Figure 2** for a depiction of existing and approved lifts within the SUP area).

All lifts will require grading or a combination of grading and tree clearing to accommodate lift towers, utility lines, the lift corridor, lift terminals, and adequate load/unload areas for guests. Each lift project is discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs. Further, a description of utility lines that will be required for the installation of each lift is described under the Construction Practices heading below.

Dreamcatcher

The Dreamcatcher Lift is expected to meet its life expectancy shortly after the completion of this NEPA process. As such, GTR is approved to replace the lift with a detachable six-passenger chairlift and gondola configuration, referred to as a “chondola,” with a gondola cabin approximately every 5 chairs. The upgraded lift will be realigned slightly to improve skier egress and accessibility. Specifically, the bottom terminal will be moved slightly to the south to accommodate the larger terminal associated with the chondola infrastructure. The top terminal will also be moved slightly to the south to create a better interface with the approved Fred’s Mountain top guest facility. This approved interface between Fred’s Mountain top guest facility and the top lift terminal will provide increased accessibility, particularly for ADA capabilities, and will enable non-skiers to dine on the mountain. Chair storage will be located adjacent to the bottom terminal.

The realignment will be approximately 100 feet longer than the existing lift, with a length of 6,050 feet, and will have a capacity of 2,280 pph. This upgrade will not only address aging infrastructure but will best serve the approved Fred’s Mountain Top Guest Facility and provide improved out-of-base functions. The configuration was not included in the 2018 MDP; however, the lift capacity will remain the same as is currently depicted in the MDP.

Crazy Horse

GTR is approved to construct a new detachable lift on Fred’s Mountain called Crazy Horse. It will be 3,849 feet long and have a capacity of 1,800 pph. The bottom lift terminal will be located near the *Powder Reserve Traverse* and the top lift terminal will be located to the southeast of Dreamcatcher top terminal. This alignment will provide better access to trails on Fred’s Mountain and allow skiers and riders to access Fred’s Mountain terrain without having to return to the base area to ride Dreamcatcher Lift. In the event the Dreamcatcher Lift is inoperable, skiers will be able to access the terrain by riding Sacajawea and Crazy Horse Lifts in succession to reach the top of Fred’s Mountain.

North Boundary

GTR is proposing to add a 2,845-foot-long North Boundary Lift to provide access to the terrain from the *North Boundary Traverse* down to Rick’s Basin. This fixed-grip triple lift will have a capacity of 1,200 people per hour and is intended to provide better utilization of the terrain at the far north edge of the resort, as well as providing access to intermediate and advanced terrain that is currently not lift-accessed. Similar to Mono Trees Lift, the North Boundary Lift will help provide a quality ski experience on those days when the Dreamcatcher Lift cannot be operated due to fog, wind, or other weather factors.

Shoshone

GTR is approved to upgrade the existing Shoshone Lift to a detachable lift. This lift may require realignment to provide better skier circulation, and in which case there will be additional grading needed for the new top and bottom terminal locations. This replacement and possible realignment are accounted for in the disturbance associated with the summer activity zone (refer to the Other Summer Activities discussion below for more information). The upgrade will improve access to surrounding ski trails for lower-ability level guests from ski school using this terrain.

Palmer Platter Surface Lift and Lights

A surface lift is approved to be installed on *Palmer's Raceway* trail in the Shoshone area called the Palmer Platter. The lift will be aligned along the southside of the tree island between *Big Horn* and *Palmer's Raceway* trails and will be 881 feet long. Lighting is approved on *Palmer's Raceway* as well. The lift will provide a quick turnaround for athletes training on *Palmer's Raceway* and the lights will allow for longer training sessions during the winter months. The lights will operate seven days a week and will be turned off by 9 p.m. Light towers will be installed on each side of the run, each one approximately 150 feet apart, for a total of 10 permanent light towers (5 on each side) approved in the area (refer to **Table C-1. Project Design Criteria** for more information on lighting related design criteria). The permanent light towers will be installed with concrete foundations approximately 3 feet x 3 feet and will require grading and some combination of grading and tree clearing for installation.

Teaching Carpet

GTR is proposing one new teaching carpet near the base of the Shoshone Lift in the Shoshone beginner area. The carpet will be approximately 430 feet in length. The approved carpet will supplement the existing carpet in the area by providing additional lift service for first time skiers/riders next to Targhee Village. It will also support a more gradual beginner progression by providing additional, needed beginner terrain for new skiers before graduating to the Shoshone Lift.

Terrain and On-Mountain Infrastructure (within the Existing SUP area)

Terrain Development, Glading and Grading

Approximately 214 acres of traditional terrain developments and improvements are approved within the existing GTR SUP area (refer to **Figure 2**). Additionally, improvements to existing glades, combined with additional gladed areas will result in approximately 550 acres of gladed areas across the resort (a portion of this glading extends into the approved Mono Trees area). Approved terrain development, glading and grading within the existing SUP area includes:

- New teaching terrain around the new teaching carpet;
- New trails and realignment of key circulation trails (*Teton Vista Traverse*, *Powder Reserve Traverse*, and *Mill Creek Traverse*);
- Two new trails, widening or extending seven trails, and glading in the areas served by the existing Dreamcatcher Lift and approved Crazy Horse Lift;
- One new trail, lengthen and realign Wild Turkey, and improve tree skiing by *The Good*, *The Bad*, *The Ugly*, and *The East Woods* through glading in the Blackfoot area;

- Two new trails and glading in the Sacajawea area;
- Trail widening and grading along Papoose Creek upon the skiway which will connect the existing Sacajawea Lift and the Colter Lift. Due to this project's proximity to Papoose Creek, it is assumed that coordination with the United States Army Corps of Engineers will be necessary;
- Construction of the trails within the North Boundary area, including six new runs, one new access route/collector trail for the North Boundary area, and two new short access routes to gain entry and exit the area; and

Approximately 25 acres of grading to accommodate the trail construction and improve the skiability of existing trails. In addition to the approved new trails and glading, a portion of the existing *Peaked* trail network will require select tree removal to accommodate additional skier capacity following the recent installation of the Colter Lift. Among the approved terrain is groomable glade-style skiing areas. Groomable glades are interconnected ski spaces that consist of a braided network of interwoven ski runs that are cleared to a width of about 50 to 80 feet and separated by small tree islands. This style of ski terrain provides a glade-like skiing experience for lower-level intermediate skiers, as it can be groomed as necessary to maintain or improve the snow surface quality.

Administrative Routes

GTR is approved for construction, reclamation, and improvements for GTR managed administrative routes within the existing SUP area. These existing non-Forest Service system administrative routes are used exclusively for resort and Forest Service access to GTR and are not open to the public for motor vehicle travel. The administrative route construction, reclamation, and improvements will eliminate steep and no longer necessary access administrative routes, as well as construct new administrative routes to bypass steep grades and improve mountain circulation and maintenance (refer to **Figure 3**). The overhaul of the administrative route network will allow GTR to reduce erosion and sedimentation and better maintain on-mountain infrastructure. Key features of this program include realign and reconstruct the *Teton Vista Traverse (TVT)*, *Powder Reserve Traverse (PRT)*, Rick's Basin Access Administrative Route, spur administrative route connecting the switchback on Peaked Mountain to the approved South Bowl administrative route, and *Mill Creek Traverse (MCT)*. Three separate administrative route actions are approved: 7.0 miles of administrative routes will be improved, 4.3 miles of administrative routes will be constructed, and 2.2 miles of administrative routes will be reclaimed. Grading and a combination of grading and tree clearing will be required for administrative route reclamation, improvement, and construction.

In addition to administrative routes within the SUP area, GTR is approved for the construction of access administrative routes into South Bowl and Mono Trees areas. These routes are described in detail under the South Bowl and Mono Trees sections previously.

Snowmaking

GTR is approved for 57 acres of snowmaking to improve lower-mountain circulation routes and high use trails (refer to **Figure 4**). By expanding their snowmaking infrastructure, GTR will be able to provide better snow surface and early season conditions. Snowmaking will be installed on the following trails:

- Lower portion of *Chief Joseph Bowl* (4.3 acres)
- *The Funnel* (3.5 acres)

- *Big Thunder* (7.5 acres)
- *Sitting Bull Ridge* (11.6 acres)
- *Headwall Traverse* (2.1 acres)
- *Big Scout* (4.6 acres)
- *Little Beaver Traverse* (4.9 acres)
- *Mill Creek Traverse* (3.4 acres)
- *Tubing Hill* (0.9 acres)
- *Blackfoot Access Route* (1.5 acres)
- *Teaching Carpets* (1.9 acres)
- *Teton Vista Traverse* (10.8 acres)

Necessary water for this increased coverage will come from additional groundwater wells. Prior to snowmaking infrastructure development, additional groundwater wells will be developed on private land in GTR's base area. As required by GTR's SUP, water sufficiency for existing and approved operations is documented in a water sufficiency letter that is on file with the CTNF.⁸ This analysis of water supply has determined that GTR's infrastructure can produce sufficient water to operate the currently permitted portion of the ski area and provide for the activities authorized in its operating plan. The approved 57 acres of additional snowmaking could also be accommodated by the existing water supply systems at GTR; however, as GTR continues to develop their base area infrastructure on private lands (as approved under the 2019 First Amended Master Plan – Planned Unit Development for Planned Resort), their groundwater infrastructure will have to be expanded. Accordingly, GTR will apply for a new well permit with the Wyoming State Engineer's Office and then develop up to two additional wells on private land to meet the future water supply demands associated with the approved snowmaking coverage. The timing for new wells is subject to the pace of development of the resort.

Guest Services Facilities

All approved facilities are intended to improve the guest experience by offering services such as food and beverage, improved customer service through additional staff resources, and areas to escape the weather on the mountain. Constructing the facilities will require either grading or grading and tree clearing to accommodate building foundations and entry and egress around facilities.

Fred's Mountain Top Guest Facility

GTR is approved to construct a full-service on-mountain guest service facility at the summit of Fred's Mountain, south of the existing Dreamcatcher Lift top terminal. This facility will serve many functions. It will serve as a central on-mountain location for skiers and riders within the Dreamcatcher and Crazy Horse areas, which will eliminate the need to descend to Targhee Village for basic services, but also be a destination restaurant offering year-round views of the Tetons. This facility will include a restaurant, bar, restrooms and ski patrol facility. Electricity will be installed from the base area via power lines trenched into existing disturbed areas or areas approved for ground disturbance which pass the site of the restaurant. Preliminary engineering review determined that sewer will be a sanitary sewer line either

⁸ Jorgensen Engineering, 2024. Water Sufficiency Letter for Grand Targhee Resort. Confidential, not available to the public.

placed in an existing disturbed corridor or corridor approved for ground disturbance based on final engineering review and recommendations.⁹ Water will be supplied from pumping water from the base area through a water line either placed in an existing disturbed corridor or corridor approved for ground disturbance based on final engineering review and recommendations. Water supply will be provided by an additional well located on GTR's private land.¹⁰ This well will need to be permitted by the Wyoming State Engineer's Office.¹¹ Additionally, the approved Dreamcatcher Lift corridor, approved snowmaking line, or approved administrative route (refer to **Figure 2**, **Figure 3**, and **Figure 4**) could accommodate additional utilities, potable water, and sewer¹² as these areas will be disturbed during the project construction process and trenching will already need to occur for other approved infrastructure or utilities. Siting of the guest facility as well as potable water and sewer systems shall be reviewed by certified engineering, architectural, geotechnical, and hydrological specialists prior to construction. The building will have simple, linear forms and utilize low-reflective materials to blend with the surrounding environment in sensitivity to viewsheds from Grand Teton National Park and will comply with the Forest Service's Built Environment Image Guide (BEIG). The facility is approved for daytime use only. Closure of this facility will be no later than an hour past the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) published sunset time for each day of the year. There will be no major night lighting associated with the approved project; however, subtle low-lying light fixtures may be installed outside the facility for maintenance and to prepare for daily operations which will primarily occur in the early morning. Outdoor lights will use full cutoff or shielded fixtures that minimize skyglow, glare, and light trespass in order to preserve dark sky values. It will be approximately 7,000 square feet of interior space and approximately 4,000 square feet of outdoor space. The realigned *Teton Vista Traverse* administrative route will provide construction access to the restaurant location. The existing communication site will be improved and sited with the approved Dreamcatcher Lift and Fred's Mountain Top Guest Facility infrastructure.

Sacajawea Restaurant and Guest Facility

In addition to the Fred's Mountain Top Guest Facility, GTR is approved to construct a full-service on-mountain guest service facility at the top terminal of the Sacajawea Lift, to serve the southern side of the resort, including the existing Sacajawea and Colter areas along with the approved Mono Trees area. This facility will include a restaurant, bar, and restrooms. Electricity will be buried from the top of Sacajawea Lift. Restrooms will be vault toilets, an onsite septic system or a sanitary sewer line, depending on corresponding engineering recommendations. All disturbance associated with septic will be located within previously disturbed corridors or disturbance corridors associated with other approved projects. Water will be supplied from an onsite well, which will be within the disturbance footprint of the approved facility. The well will need to be permitted by the Wyoming State Engineer's Office.¹³ The facility is approved for daytime use only. Closure of this facility will be no later than an hour past NOAA's published sunset time for each day of the year. There will be no major night lighting associated with the approved project; however, subtle low-lying light fixtures may be installed outside the facility for maintenance and to prepare for daily operations which will primarily occur in the early morning. Outdoor light will use full cutoff or shielded fixtures that minimize skyglow, glare, and light trespass in order to preserve dark sky values. The facility is approved to offer approximately 6,500 square feet of interior

⁹ Jorgensen Engineering. 2026. Water and Wastewater Service Feasibility – Fred's Mountain Top Restaurant. Confidential, not available to the public.

¹⁰ Jorgensen Engineering. 2024. Water Sufficiency Letter for Grand Targhee Resort. Confidential, not available to the public.

¹¹ The approved onsite well is anticipated to be limited to a diversion of less than 3 acre-feet per year for consumptive and sanitary uses at the approved facility and will be subject to permitting from the Wyoming State Engineer's Office.

¹² Proper offsetting distances between the potable water line and sewer line will be able to be accommodated in the identified disturbance corridors.

¹³ The approved onsite well is anticipated to be limited to a diversion of less than 1 acre-foot per year for consumptive and sanitary uses at the approved facility and will be subject to permitting from the Wyoming State Engineer's Office.

space. Additionally, approximately 2,000 square feet of deck space is approved for outdoor seating. The upgraded administrative route off the *Powder Reserve Traverse* will provide construction access to the approved facility location.

Shoshone Guest Facility

To accommodate guests using beginner terrain and the Summer Activity Zone, GTR is approved to construct a guest facility at the top of the Shoshone Lift. The facility will be approximately 1,500 square feet of indoor space and approximately 2,000 square feet of deck or outdoor space. The facility will provide a simple, rustic environment. It will offer services to guests during the day, and also the potential as a dinner destination with access by evening winter sleigh rides or summer horseback rides; access to this location in the summer and winter could be provided via the existing administrative route to be upgraded culminating at the top of the Shoshone Lift (refer to **Figure 3**). This facility will include restaurant seating, a simple kitchen, and restrooms. Electricity will be spired from an existing electricity line supplying Shoshone Lift. A vault toilet will be constructed at the top of the lift. Water will be supplied from an onsite well within the disturbance footprint of the approved facility or will be transported to the facility. The well will need to be permitted by the Wyoming State Engineer’s Office.¹⁴ The upgraded administrative route to the top of the Shoshone Lift will provide construction access to the facility.

Rick’s Basin Guest Facility

GTR is approved to construct an on-mountain guest facility in Rick’s Basin, within the Nordic trail system to support the Nordic trail network. The facility will be outfitted with limited food service (i.e., outdoor grill and cold sandwiches, snacks, beverages, etc.), a wood stove, and a vault toilet. Its primary purpose will be to provide a warm area for guests coming off the mountain. The structure will be approximately 1,500 square feet.

Storage and Vault Toilet Facilities

At the base of the approved North Boundary storage and vault toilet facilities are approved. Improving the existing vault toilet at the bottom of the Blackfoot Lift to include a storage facility is also approved. These will provide additional on-mountain storage space for staff to improve guest services and address staffing needs. The North Boundary storage facility will also include a vault toilet; whereas a separate vault toilet already exists at the Blackfoot Lift. The disturbance for these facilities is included in each lift’s bottom terminal disturbance footprints.

Non-winter and Alternative activities

Summer Recreation Trails

To provide additional summer activities, GTR is approved to construct approximately 29 additional miles of trail to enhance the existing network (refer to **Figure 3**). This includes 6 miles of downhill biking trails, 2 miles of hiking trails, and 21 miles of multi-use trails.

Downhill biking trails will include 9 new trails totaling 6 miles, including:

- Three trails descending from the *Grand Traverse* trail, adjacent to the existing *Tall Cool One* trail,
- A trail descending adjacent to the *Blondie* trail.

¹⁴ The approved onsite well is anticipated to be limited to a diversion of less than 1 acre-foot per year for consumptive and sanitary uses at the approved facility and will be subject to permitting from the Wyoming State Engineer’s Office.

- A trail starting at the administrative route just east of the Sidewinder trail and ending at the Bullwinkle trail,
- A connector trail between the existing Rock Garden trail to the approved Summer Activity Zone,
- A connector trail between Crazy Horse and Sticks and Stones trails to provide an easier alternative to the existing Grand Traverse,
- A re-route around the Summer Activity Zone, and
- A connector between *Rick's* and *Otterslide* trails.

Hiking trails will include 1 new trail totaling 2 miles, including:

- A trail from *Mary's Saddle* to the base area.

Multi-use trails will include 17 new trails totaling 21 miles, including:

- A *Tall Cool One* cutoff trail,
- An extension for the existing *North Woods* loop, starting at the base of the *North Woods* trail and connecting with the *Quakie Ridge* trail,
- A connector trail between the approved *North Woods-Quakie Ridge* connector and the bottom of the *Quakie Ridge* trail,
- A *Quakie Ridge* extension trail,
- A loop with a variety of switchbacks starting and ending along *Rick's Basin* trail,
- A beginner loop in between the *Rick's Basin* and *Snowdrift* trails,
- An outer loop on the western edge of the SUP boundary, extending from the *Roundabout* trail and terminating at *Greenhorn Access*,
- A shorter, beginner loop inside the existing *Jolly Green Giants* trail,
- A trail from *Colter's* to *Peaked* trails,
- A new trail from *Ain't Life Grand* to *Peaked* trails, with a segment extending west past the *Peaked* trail,
- A trail extending from *Action Jackson*, intersecting with *Andy's* and *Trail 3*, and connecting with the approved *Ain't Life Grand-Peaked* trail,
- A trail descending from the top of the Colter Lift to the northern tip of the *Ain't Life Grand* trail,
- A loop extending from Ski Hill Road and the base area, intersecting with the base of the Sacajawea Lift and the *Action Jackson* trail,
- An outer trail around the *Buffalo Soldier* trail, connecting *Buffalo Soldier* and *Rocky Mountain Way*,
- A loop extending from the *38 Special* trail,
- A trail connecting the existing *38 Special* and *Peaked* trails,
- A connector trail between the northernmost approved downhill mountain biking trail to the existing *Bring it On Home* trail in the Summer Activity Zone.

Trail construction will occur primarily on NFS lands, although some construction will occur on GTR's private parcels. Construction will involve grading to create an appropriate surface for the intended trail

experience as well as some grading and tree clearing in forested areas. With the construction of these new trails, demand for additional trail infrastructure could be satisfied, and trail-based recreational opportunities will be augmented in the area. The approved trails offer an ideal opportunity for GTR to assist the CTNF in stewarding the land.

Other Summer Activities

GTR is approved to focus their multi-season recreation opportunities in and around Shoshone Lift area (refer to **Figure 3**). This area was called the Summer Activity Zone in the 2018 MDP and was allocated for high density of activities and concentrated use. This is an ideal location for GTR's summer activity hub because it is an accessible location for a wide range of guests. The moderate terrain allows for guests to experience the natural environment in a structured area. Activities in this area could include a canopy tour/fly line, zip line, aerial adventure course, and disc golf course. These activities will be located on NFS lands.

While the Summer Activity Zone was designated to allow for flexibility in locating activities and accommodate new activities as summer recreation evolves at ski areas, preliminary sites have been identified as being capable of accommodating certain experiences. The canopy tour or fly line will start west of the Shoshone Lift top terminal. It will be a multi-station tour where guests will travel on an elevated tour through the tree canopy. A canopy tour is a more traditional activity where guests wear harnesses and use short zip lines to travel from station to station, while a fly line is a hybrid mountain coaster/zip line where guests wear harnesses but travel along a track from station to station.

The zip line will start south of the Shoshone Lift top terminal. It will consist of a multi-segment zip line; a shorter segment to get guests familiar to the zip line harness and equipment and a second zip line of more than 2,000 feet over the event area.

The aerial adventure course will start northeast of the Shoshone Lift bottom terminal or uphill of the event area. This elevated challenge course includes a series of elements of varying length and difficulty for both adults and children.

The disc golf course will also be re-located within the Summer Activity Zone to the north of the approved canopy tour/fly line.

It is assumed that the entirety of the Summer Activity Zone will be disturbed through construction of the activities within, and this is reflected in its disturbance footprint that is carried through this analysis.

Alternative Winter Activities

GTR also is approved to construct a permanent, dedicated snow tubing facility located to the west of the Sioux Lodge on NFS lands (refer to **Figure 2**). The facility includes lighting for night operation and snowmaking infrastructure sufficient to ensure quality construction and maintenance of tubing lanes (refer to **Section 3.2** in the FEIS for more information). Electricity to this location will likely be provided by a power line connecting to the base terminal of the Shoshone Lift. The approved snowtubing facility will be located in a previously disturbed area within the GTR base area and snow will be used to construct the tubing lanes. No tree clearing or grading will be required. Approved snowmaking coverage for the tubing facility totals approximately 2 acres.

GTR also is approved to expand the Nordic, snowshoeing and fat biking offerings. To improve access to Rick's Basin, GTR is approved to realign and re-grade the existing, steep trail segment from the base terminal of Blackfoot Lift into Rick's Basin eliminating the existing steep grade. Additionally, the existing

Nordic trail and alpine ski-out trail connecting the bottom terminal of the Blackfoot Lift with *Little Beaver Traverse* will be graded to make the slope more consistent and to increase the width of trail for dual-use by alpine and Nordic skiers. A total of approximately 1.4 miles of Nordic trails will be constructed to improve connectivity with the Rick's Basin trails. A portion of these new Nordic trails will be established on private lands and near the tubing center to tie Nordic skiing into the Targhee Village and introduce additional trail variety. As discussed previously, an approximately 1,500 square foot Rick's Basin Guest Facility with vault toilets and potable water will also be located within the Rick's Basin trail network.

Construction Practices

Construction for the approved projects will generally occur during the snow-free months and will be confined to daylight hours (e.g., within the hours of 7am-7pm). There may be exceptions to this where resource conditions dictate. For example, if over the snow tree removal were determined appropriate from a nesting bird or soil disturbance perspective then construction could extend to months where snow is present.

Further, implementation will occur over an approximately 10-year period from the time of approval. Project implementation will be subject to capital availability and may be expedited or delayed based on economic conditions.

During construction of any Selected Alternative, some or all of the permitted area will be closed to public access. Closures will apply to both permitted and dispersed use. These closures will be exercised to protect members of the public from potentially harmful conditions due to construction activities.

The existing administrative route network at GTR provides access to existing lifts and trails and will be available for preliminary phases of construction for all alternatives. The Selected Alternative includes upgrades to existing administrative routes and the construction of additional administrative routes which will provide sufficient access to areas with approved projects. Administrative route improvement projects, including new administrative routes, are depicted in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**. Prior to starting construction activities, GTR shall develop a Construction Implementation Plan for Forest Service Review and Authorization (see **Table C-1** for more details). Equipment and vehicles will be transported for construction and maintenance purposes via these administrative routes. Low-impact machinery (e.g., a spider hoe) can be used on steep terrain to assist with chairlift and trail construction. Helicopters will assist with tree removal and transporting heavy machinery and infrastructure.

Tree Removal

Tree removal methods are subject to change based on conditions discovered in the field during project implementation and those contracted to complete the tree removal work. What is described in this section is the range of potential methods that could be used for tree removal, which are analyzed in **Chapter 3** of the FEIS based on what is most impactful to a given resource (unless otherwise specified). For example, helicopter use is analyzed in **Section 3.3** of the FEIS, as this is the most impactful tree removal option from a noise standpoint.

Tree removal methods, including in gladed areas, will primarily be accomplished over-the-snow and utilizing the on-mountain administrative route network. No skid roads will be constructed as timber will either be removed over the snow via snowcat, transported over the snow to a deck location accessible from the administrative route network, piled and burned, or removed via helicopter. Low-impact machinery (e.g. a spider hoe or helicopter) may be necessary in areas such as South Bowl with steep terrain to assist with tree removal. In some cases, tree removal in gladed ski areas will require burning.

Trees will be hand cut and the vegetation will be burned in smaller piles along the trails within openings cleared for skiing. Pile burning of cleared timber must adhere to the State of Wyoming Burn Permit regulations and will depend on the time of year (i.e. to avoid fire season). Prior to burning timber, GTR must consult with the CTNF on size of slash piles in order to prevent soil sterilization and timing of burning. Hazard trees identified throughout the SUP area during construction will be removed to facilitate safe operation of the approved terrain for an increased number of guests.

Administrative Routes

GTR is approved for construction, reclamation, and improvements on administrative routes within and adjacent to the existing SUP area. For existing administrative routes to be upgraded, this will primarily occur through additional grading and resurfacing in key areas. These areas have been identified as those that already experience challenges in accommodating existing on-mountain travel or will not be capable of accommodating vehicles and infrastructure associated with approved projects. Construction equipment and supplies will be transported via existing administrative routes. For administrative route construction, existing administrative routes will be used to transport heavy machinery and explosives where rock blasting is necessary for sufficient administrative route conditions. Gravel and other surface materials will be supplied as necessary via existing and newly constructed administrative routes. For administrative route reclamation, gravel will be removed and the slope and other characteristics of the surrounding landscape will be restored for the entirety of the reclaimed administrative route sections. To the extent possible, materials from administrative route reclamations will be used for administrative route building and upgrading projects, and materials such as timber from building and upgrading projects will be used to assist the reclamation process.

Portions of specific projects (e.g., towers on a lift line) will utilize temporary construction routes to facilitate their construction. The temporary construction routes will typically be located within the disturbance footprint of other project components and will not require earthwork. Low impact machinery such as spider hoes, light duty trucks, and utility task vehicles (UTVs) will be the only vehicles that will travel on these routes. These routes will be restored and revegetated following construction.

Ski Trails

Most approved ski trails will require tree removal according to the practices described in the Tree Removal section above. Select trails might also require grading. This will primarily be done using low-impact machinery such as a spider hoe. Due to the nature of terrain in the South Bowl area, approved trails in South Bowl will require heavy machinery to create well-defined and smooth skiable surfaces. Rock blasting will also be employed as necessary within certain approved project areas to remove rock outcroppings.

To expand snowmaking, GTR will dig trenches in trails with approved snowmaking to install water lines. Equipment and access will be provided via administrative routes or on snow cats via groomable trails. In general, disturbance corridors for approved snowmaking will be approximately 40 feet wide. This disturbance could be reduced in areas where sensitive resources are determined to be present. Following implementation, these corridors will be revegetated.

Lifts

Lifts approved within the SUP area will require power lines to be buried. GTR is approved to build trenches in administrative routes and other disturbed areas. GTR plans to co-locate utilities in disturbed areas (existing or as approved for projects in this analysis) to the greatest extent practicable. GTR will use

heavy machinery such as an excavator in the summer to dig these trenches as administrative routes are constructed. Utility lines and their locations for each lift project are described below:

- **Dreamcatcher** – Communications and fiber optic lines will be buried in a new trench along the approved lift line, and electricity will be supplied via an existing line.
- **Crazy Horse** – Electricity will be supplied to the top of the lift in the catwalk from the Dreamcatcher top terminal and to the bottom of the lift from the Dreamcatcher junction box and buried in the PRT. Communication and fiber lines will be buried along the approved lift line.
- **North Boundary** – Fiber and electrical will be provided to the North Boundary Lift via a line trenched into the approved administrative route providing access to the bottom terminal. Electrical will also be provided from the top of the Blackfoot Lift to the top terminal of North Boundary, in the approved administrative route along *Blackfoot Traverse*. Fiber and communications lines will be buried along the lift line.
- **Shoshone** – Electricity supplied to top and bottom terminals in existing administrative routes to be upgraded.
- **Palmer Platter** – Electricity supplied to top station in existing administrative route to be upgraded.
- **Teaching Carpet** – Electricity supplied via an extension of Dreamcatcher power line.

Since they are not common to all alternatives, a discussion of the Mono Trees and South Bowl approved utility line plans can be found under the South Bowl and Mono Trees headings above.

Before lift installation, tree removal will be necessary along the approved lift lines and will follow the practices described in **the** Tree Removal heading above. To install the lifts, parts will be transported via administrative routes or helicopter where necessary. Construction will occur on-site and will include a spider hoe to dig tower foundations and grade terminal locations. Heavy machinery and blasting will also be utilized for terminals.

On-Mountain Facilities

Approved on-mountain facilities are located adjacent to existing and approved administrative routes. Construction materials and machinery will be provided to each facility site via administrative routes. Vegetation removal will not be required in any of the approved sites. Disturbed areas where permanent infrastructure will not be located will be revegetated to the greatest extent possible. Following the final signed ROD, design plans for all above ground structures and improvements including infrastructure, facilities, and buildings will be reviewed by the Forest Service responsible official. Structures will follow color and reflectivity guidelines as described in the Built Environment Image Guide.

Multi-Season Recreational Activities

The approved Summer Activity Zone is located adjacent to Targhee Village and is easily accessible via existing administrative routes. Timber removal will be necessary for zip line and fly line activities. Towers for the approved canopy tours will be accessible via existing administrative routes and construction will most likely be completed over the snow to minimize resource impacts.

Appendix C – Project Design Criteria

Table C-1. Project Design Criteria

Resource	Project Design Criteria
General	<p>Prior to initiating construction activities on NFS lands, GTR shall develop a comprehensive Construction Implementation Plan (CIP) for projects they intend to construct (as included in this EIS each construction season. The CIP shall detail how the project(s) planned for construction are consistent with, and will comply with, the Record of Decision. The CIP shall detail planned construction/implementation methodologies sufficient to demonstrate compliance with, and fulfillment of, all applicable Project Design Criteria. If, during the course of implementation, GTR fails to adhere to the CIP, the Forest Service has the authority to suspend construction or operations. The CIP(s) shall be submitted for Forest Service construction authorization prior to initiation of any specific project and include the following information as appropriate for the project(s) being undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Management: Project timelines, project contracts, disturbance boundaries, grading and site plans, staging and parking areas, construction/site access, and any required survey information. • PDCs: a checklist of all relevant PDCs which are understood and agreed to apply to each individual project. • Timber management: Defined logging deck areas and skid paths, and protocol for timber removal. • Erosion Control and Drainage Management: Erosion control and drainage management protocols and plans that include the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identification of BMPs such as silt fences, straw bales/wattles, ground cover or mulching measures, or sediment control protocols to contain sediment on-site. ○ Appropriate erosion-control matting on steep fill slopes (areas with a slope angle of 35 percent or greater) to protect soils and enhance vegetation re-establishment. ○ Strategies to minimize hillslope runoff to extent practicable. ○ Identification of areas where topsoil and organic matter will be used and reclaimed after disturbances. ○ Defined grading limits and physical barriers along the perimeter of graded areas. • Post-Construction Revegetation and Restoration plan: Methodology, locations, vegetative mixes, and soil amendments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A list of materials to be used for site stabilization and revegetation (i.e., soil amendments, seed mixes, erosion control products). Seed mixtures and mulches shall be certified to be free of noxious weeds and must be approved by the Forest Service botanist or other Forest Service qualified personnel prior to purchase. Seed test results for each seed lot shall be made available to the Forest Service prior to purchase. To prevent soil erosion, non-persistent, non-native perennials or sterile perennials may be used while native perennials become established. ○ Revegetation techniques including the proposed timing and method of application for seed, mulches, and erosion control products. ○ Protocols for managing disturbed areas to maintain sufficient ground cover to prevent increased runoff and erosion. Ground cover, as a combination of revegetation, woody debris, fine organic matter, surface rocks, and mulch, shall be 70 percent of natural background cover following reclamation activities to minimize erosion. Revegetation success and ground cover effectiveness shall be determined in consultation with the Forest Service resource specialists. • Noxious Weed Management: Weed control methodologies including equipment cleaning, pretreatment, and post-construction monitoring and treatment. This can tier to the Grand Targhee Resort Weed Prevention and Management Program as specified in the Vegetation PDC below. • Best Management Practices (BMPs): BMP list to be employed and adhered to during project implementation. <p>GTR shall obtain all required federal, county, town, and state reviews, approvals, and/or permits prior to the start of construction.</p>

Resource	Project Design Criteria
	<p>Due to specific concerns regarding the Hominy Peak and Darby Formations, within two years following completion of projects in Rick's Basin and South Bowl, GTR shall complete an assessment of the effectiveness of the erosion control and drainage management actions for review and acceptance by the Forest Service which addresses the potential for increased erosion and soil movement in these two areas that may have resulted from ground disturbance associated with the approved action. The assessment plan shall identify and prioritize problematic locations needing remediation. Potential measures include improvement of existing drainage infrastructure such as road-side ditches and culverts, construction of new drainage features, and enhanced revegetation. The assessment plan shall be updated within two years following implementation and once five years thereafter to address completed remediation projects and to include newly identified issues.</p>
<p>Recreation</p>	<p>All improvement projects, as well as signage and trail signs shall follow Forest Service accessibility guidelines as outlined by the Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines, Forest Service Accessibility Guidelines for Ski Resorts, and Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines.</p>
	<p>Where appropriate, GTR shall implement fencing, flagging, signage and other safety mechanisms to alert winter and summer visitors to the location of activities and infrastructure during construction.</p>
	<p>GTR shall decommission and reclaim unauthorized biking and hiking trails developed by third parties as they are discovered within the SUP boundary.</p>
	<p>GTR shall implement appropriate signage to direct uphill and downhill traffic and prevent user conflict on all mountain biking and hiking trails which shall be specified in future operating plans.</p>
	<p>GTR shall develop an Operation and Boundary Management Plan to guide users exiting the permit boundary to the adjacent backcountry terrain through established and maintained exit points. This plan should describe both physical closures and operational measures to be taken. Prior to construction activities authorized by this decision, this plan shall be reviewed by the Forest Service. This plan shall be finalized and incorporated into the operating plan prior to the operation of lift served terrain in South Bowl and Mono Trees. Boundary post and rope line installation shall utilize the same technique which has been developed for use elsewhere within GTR's existing SUP boundary.</p>
<p>Scenery</p>	<p>All lighting within the SUP boundary and approved SUP boundary expansion shall comply with Teton County, Wyoming Dark Skies Land Development Regulation unless specifically exempted by a Forest Service Authorizing Official.</p>
	<p>Windows on facilities shall have anti-reflective treatment, coating, or integral windows. Lift terminals shall have natural/neutral colors with anti-reflective materials. All facilities shall have design review by CTNF authorized representative.</p>
	<p>Avoid straight edges where removing trees. The edges of lift-lines, ski trails, glades, and structures, where the vegetation is removed, need to use a variable density cutting (feathering) technique applied to create a more natural edge that blends into the existing vegetation. Edges shall be non-linear, and changes in tree heights along the edges of openings should be gradual rather than abrupt. Larger inter-trail tree islands shall be maintained to minimize the impact of cleared trails. Trees shall be retained, where possible, to provide species and size diversity, maintain forest cover, and screen facilities.</p>
	<p>Cut stumps as low as possible to the ground or grind in place instead of grubbing when clearing trees from ski runs wherever practicable, to avoid safety hazard and to meet scenery objectives.</p>
<p>Regrade disturbed areas to restore a natural terrain appearance, as feasible. Blend site grading disturbance into the existing topography to achieve a natural appearance and minimize cuts and fills at the transition with approved grading and existing terrain. Side casting of administrative routes should be limited. Cut material should be filled in on the downslope side of the administrative route consistent with Soils PDC, to provide a more natural appearing surface.</p>	

Resource	Project Design Criteria
<p>Scenery</p>	<p>Bright rock areas, newly exposed through excavation or side casting, should be treated with Natina or an equivalent weathering/coloring agent to reduce the contrast of newly exposed rocks.</p>
	<p>To meet solar reflectivity standards and minimize visual impacts associated with reflectivity from installed infrastructure, all facilities shall be built with design elements that break up form, line, and texture to minimize reflectivity in accordance with FSM 2380. This includes any reflective surfaces (metal, glass, plastics, or other materials with smooth surfaces), that do not blend with the natural environment. They shall be covered, painted, stained, chemically treated, etched, sandblasted, corrugated, or otherwise treated to meet the solar reflectivity standards to the extent practicable. The colors shall be muted, subdued colors because they blend well with the natural color scheme. Surface textures shall be increased or made coarser and recessed windows shall be used to reduce exposure to the sun and limit reflectivity. The specific requirements for reflectivity are as follows: reflective surfaces on the approved facilities shall be painted with earth tones and natural colors or with dark non-reflective colors that blend with the forest background to meet an average neutral value of 4.5 or less as measured on the Munsell neutral scale.</p>
	<p>Utilities shall be buried to reduce visual effects and disturbance minimized by use of the smallest machinery possible (stinger or smallest excavator bucket width).</p>
	<p>Nighttime use of Fred’s Mountain Top Guest Facility or the Sacajawea Restaurant and Guest Facility is not included in the Action Alternatives. Closure of these facilities shall be required no later than an hour past NOAA’s published sunset time for each day of the year. Nighttime use of these facilities shall be subject to additional NEPA review and cannot be permitted via changes in the operating plan.</p>
<p>Cultural Resources</p>	<p>Site-specific cultural resource surveys have been conducted. If undocumented historic and/or prehistoric properties are located during ground disturbing activities or planning activities associated with approved construction activities, address as specified in 36 CFR § 800.11 concerning Properties Discovered During Implementation of an Undertaking.</p>
	<p>If there are resources determined eligible to the NRHP, the CTNF shall consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Tribal entities regarding mitigation of adverse effects to historic properties as outlined in 36 CFR 800.4 and 36 CFR 800.5.</p>
	<p>Prior to implementation of the Mill Creek access administrative route and ski way, test cultural site 48TE2171, a prehistoric chipped stone scatter near Mill Creek to better assess the depositional context and whether there are additional buried cultural materials in the area. If testing reveals additional cultural materials consultation with a Forest Archaeologist shall occur prior to construction. Location of cultural sites is resource sensitive and GTR shall coordinate with the Forest Service to determine specific testing needed for this site.</p>
<p>Air Quality</p>	<p>To prevent construction related fugitive dust, water (as necessary and practicable) all grading areas, including lift terminal areas and busy construction routes. In the absence of natural precipitation, watering of these areas should occur as frequently as necessary to subdue dust.</p>
<p>Vegetation</p>	<p>Before implementing any approved project construction not included in the botanical survey area, the specific project areas shall be surveyed using established protocol. Surveys shall be conducted for threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, Forest Service sensitive species, Species of Local Concern (SOLC), and species of viability concern (SVC). These survey results should be included in the Construction Implementation Plan. Flag sensitive plant locations and erect visual barriers to aid construction personnel in avoidance.</p>
	<p>If any previously undocumented or unknown occurrences of threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive plants are encountered within the project area prior to or during project implementation, the CTNF shall be notified. CTNF shall develop suitable mitigation measures to ensure there is no loss of viability of the species within the planning area.</p>
	<p>Construction practices and operations should avoid impacting native plant communities through designation of formal access paths in heavy use areas and other appropriate means.</p>

Resource	Project Design Criteria
Vegetation	Project components requiring selective tree clearing and glading will encourage the retention of aspen in any age or size class.
	For projects that involve logging operations, ground skidding shall be avoided on slopes steeper than 40 percent.
	<p>If slash disposal is conducted by pile and burn, implement the following PDC to minimize impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, conduct pile burning over a protective layer of packed snow and/or frozen ground. • Construct slash piles to minimize soil impacts by leaving the bottom two lifts of logs open. • If snow/frozen ground is not present at the time of pile burning, soil organic matter and topsoil should be scraped and stockpiled prior to pile construction and re-spread after pile burning; and till/scarify after burning to promote recovery by breaking up water repellent layers, increasing water infiltration, and mixing in organic material.
	<p>If chipping or mastication is determined to be used for slash disposal, implement the following PDC to minimize impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread wood chips to a depth not to exceed 3 inches. • Distribute chips in discontinuous patches that do not result in a continuous chip mat (<40 percent of surface covered by 3 inches of chips).
	If slash is to be lopped and scattered, depth shall not exceed 24 inches.
	Locate staging areas, stockpiles, and logging decks and burn piles away from weed infested areas. Monitor and control new weeds in staging areas and stockpiles.
	Use only gravel, fill, sand, and rock that are judged to be weed free by the State, North American Weed Free Program, or Forest weed specialists.
	<p>Prior to construction, establish a Grand Targhee Resort Weed Prevention and Management Program that applies to the entire SUP area, existing and expanded. The plan must be reviewed by the Forest Service. Ensure the plan includes sections on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevention: Proactive approaches to reduce the spread of weeds, including: conduct ground-disturbing activities only if previously approved by the Forest Service and necessary for public safety or Resort function, minimize ground disturbance when conducting such activities, design public-use facilities to reduce accidental spread of invasive species, and educate and raise awareness with internal and external audiences about the threat of invasive weeds. 2. Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR): Carry out regular detection surveys and record the locations of weeds throughout the Resort. Require at least one annual survey of all wetlands, administrative routes, buildings, revegetated areas, chairlift terminals, and base area. Survey all trails once every three years. The intent is to quickly detect invasive species infestations, and subsequently implement immediate and specific actions to eradicate those infestations before they become established and/or spread. Ensure plan is consistent with guidance from the National Invasive Species Council, such as the 'Guidelines for Early Detection and Rapid Response'. 3. Control & Management: Conduct integrated weed management activities to contain, reduce, and remove established weed infestations. Consider high-use summer recreation and maintenance areas such as the base area, administrative routes, summer-operating chairlift terminals, and trails as high priority for weed control. Follow all design criteria listed in Section 2.4 and BMPs in Appendix E-F from the Caribou-Targhee Forest-wide 2021 Integrated Weed Management Plan FEIS, and follow all relevant BMPs from the 2012 National Best Management Practices for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands. 4. Restoration: Where necessary, implement restoration, rehabilitation, and/or revegetation activities following invasive species treatments to prevent or reduce the likelihood of the reoccurrence or spread. Use native species in revegetation efforts.

Resource	Project Design Criteria
Vegetation	<p>When applying chemical herbicide near wetlands or streams, follow label restrictions and all relevant BMPs from the National Best Management Practices for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands (USDA Forest Service 2012).</p>
	<p>Prior to project implementation, WBP management guidelines shall be included in an updated Vegetation Plan as required to be part of the Special Use Permit for Grand Targhee Resort. The Vegetation Plan shall reference the Standing Analysis for Effects to Whitebark Pine (<i>Pinus albicaulis</i>) from Low Effect Projects and Whitebark Pine Restoration and Recovery Activities within Montana and Wyoming (https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/20230117_WBP_FWS_StandingAnalysisWBP_and_Cover_Memo_Final_Signed.pdf)</p>
	<p>During tree removal for new disturbances (e.g., runs and trails), selectively retain 5-needle pine (whitebark pine and limber pine) and instead remove alternate tree species. Retain tree islands of WBP and limber pine in approved ski runs, particularly at higher elevations to increase visibility during low visibility weather conditions and help minimize loss of WBP. If not practicable, mature 5-needle pine (whitebark pine and limber pine) removal shall be approved by the Forest Service after site-specific review. Maintenance of existing runs (mowing) is allowed to continue as it has in the past. Any grading maintenance shall select for species other than WBP and limber pine.</p>
	<p>When marking is deemed appropriate by Forest Service or construction personnel, WBP trees shall be marked in a manner that does not cause damage to the tree or introduce disease.</p>
	<p>Limit motorized travel (including using over snow vehicles in thin snowpack) in WBP habitat to designated administrative routes, cat tracks, and groomed trails.</p>
	<p>Presently known WBP Plus Trees shall be preserved and protected from project impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates for the two known Plus Trees that are present in the project area shall be used to locate the trees and trees shall be sufficiently flagged/marked to ensure preservation. Labels shall be maintained by Forest Service personnel to ensure ground disturbance from the use of mechanical equipment shall not occur within 10 meters. • Erosion control and revegetation around known Plus Trees shall be implemented following disturbance to ensure the viability of each tree. • Damage or removal of known plus trees shall only occur in natural situations or where human health and safety are at risk and shall be approved by the Forest Service after a site-specific visit. Pruning may only occur for the purpose of restoration and under Forest Service direction.
	<p>Educate resort employees about WBP ecology, importance, protection, and recovery prior to implementing projects in WBP habitat. Train Grand Targhee Resort maintenance personnel annually to identify 5-needle pines and to avoid impacting adult 5-needle pines during trail maintenance activities.</p>
	<p>Prior to development in areas with known or suspected WBP cover, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted to map the approximate areas and densities of WBP trees to be impacted. Information from pre-construction surveys shall be used to help avoid impacting or removing WBP trees when practicable and ensure impacts are accurately quantified. These surveys shall be included in the Construction Implementation Plan.</p>
	<p>Trail and other infrastructure maintenance activities should avoid removing mature WBP trees and focus on pruning trees to acceptable heights to maintain cone bearing branches and allow for continued seed production.</p>
	<p>Do not use live WBP trees as trail markers.</p>
<p>Obtain “Whitebark Pine Friendly Ski Area” Certification from the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation prior to project implementation. Certification requirements include implementation of a WBP education program, developing a conservation plan that includes mitigation for impacted WBP, and implementing a monitoring program to assess population status and conservation success.</p>	

Resource	Project Design Criteria
Wildlife and Fish	<p>To reduce the potential of human/bear conflicts, food products; containers; and bear attractants shall be disposed of in self-locking, certified bear resistant containers or dumpsters approved by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (general timeline is from March 1 to December 1). Trash receptacles at construction sites that include food related waste or bear attractants shall be bear-resistant. Food and drink shall be stored in construction vehicles or bearproof containers. All vehicular windows shall be kept closed and doors locked to prevent bear entry. Resort BMPs employed upon implementation shall ensure proper storage/disposal of bear attractants including attractants associated with food and drink services which shall be stored inside bear-resistant buildings. (In accordance with Order Number 04-15-23-117)</p>
	<p>Contractors, construction workers, and resort employees shall be annually trained in bear safety including use of bear spray. Training in grizzly bear identification shall also be provided and a system for documenting grizzly bear observations and conflicts should be implemented. Project personnel shall keep bear spray accessible when they are working in the Project Area from April 1 to November 15.</p>
	<p>Appropriate signage and informational materials shall be posted to reduce the risk of human/wildlife conflicts (e.g., bear-proof food storage).</p>
	<p>If a grizzly bear den is found within the current GTR boundary or approved expansion area, either during construction or implementation, coordination with the Forest Service wildlife biologist shall occur to ensure that activities shall not impact the survival of the denning bear.</p>
	<p>To minimize impacts to mule deer winter range and modeled bighorn sheep habitat, GTR shall establish and maintain a double-rope boundary around the Mono Trees and South Bowl SUP boundary expansions prior to construction in such areas and place backcountry access points in locations that minimize human encroachment on identified habitat. Placement of backcountry access points shall be done in coordination with the Forest Service Wildlife Biologist and shall be specified in GTR's Operation and Boundary Management Plan.</p>
	<p>Artificial lighting shall be minimized. All artificial lighting shall be shielded and angled downward to minimize impacts to nocturnal species.</p>
	<p>To the extent possible markers or flagging shall be installed and maintained on zip line infrastructure to reduce the likelihood of bird strikes.</p>
	<p>GTR shall place decals or other deterrents on new facility or infrastructure windows to reduce the likelihood of bird strikes. Decals and deterrents shall be present year-round.</p>
	<p>Riparian areas that experience any loss of vegetation (resulting from construction activities) shall be re-vegetated immediately after construction with native vegetation, willow cuttings, and/or native, certified, weed free seed.</p>
	<p>If construction/vegetation clearing activities must occur during the golden eagle nesting period, which is considered from March 1 to August 15, U.S. Forest Service personnel (or individuals deemed qualified by the Forest Service) shall conduct nest searches in appropriate habitats prior to the commencement of the construction/vegetation clearing activities. The exact area to be surveyed shall be based on the scope of the disturbance activities and the habitat to be disturbed. If nesting golden eagles occur, the Forest Service shall delineate appropriate buffers and halt construction within the buffers until the nesting is complete.</p>
<p>If golden eagle nesting occurs within or proximate to the project area during the life of the permit, coordination shall occur with Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologists to ensure that ongoing recreation activities directly associated with the Resort will not result in harm, harassment, or take of the species.</p>	
<p>If any threatened, endangered, and Forest Service sensitive species and/or their habitats, including nests, not analyzed in this EIS, are identified during project implementation or project operations, actions in the immediate vicinity shall be suspended until the Forest Service Wildlife or Fish Biologist or Botanist are contacted. Project implementation may be adjusted, and timing restrictions may be applied, as determined by the Forest Service, to reduce those impacts.</p>	

Resource	Project Design Criteria
<p>Wildlife and Fish</p>	<p>Vegetation clearing activities are generally planned to occur outside of the migratory bird nesting period, which is typically from May 15 to July 15. If vegetation clearing activities must occur during the nesting period, U.S. Forest Service personnel (or contractor deemed qualified by the Forest Service) shall conduct nest searches in appropriate habitats prior to the commencement of the vegetation clearing activities. The exact area to be surveyed shall be based on the scope of the surface disturbance activities, the habitat to be disturbed, and the potential species to be impacted. If nesting migratory birds occur, the Forest Service shall delineate appropriate buffers and halt construction within the buffers until the nesting is complete.</p>
	<p>To reduce the likelihood of disturbance to/fatalities of individual American goshawks, no vegetation clearing/construction activities associated with the Selected Alternative shall occur within the American goshawk designated 200-acre nest area from April 1 to August 15.</p>
	<p>To prevent disturbance to/fatalities of individual boreal owls, no vegetation clearing/construction activities associated with the Selected Alternative shall occur within the boreal owl designated 30-acre territories from March 1 to August 15.</p>
	<p>Tree clearing for construction of a approved segment of summer trail along the western extent of the existing SUP area within the designated American goshawk post fledging area shall only occur between October and February.</p>
	<p>To prevent disturbance to/fatalities of individual flammulated owls, no vegetation clearing/construction activities associated with the Selected Alternative shall occur within the flammulated owl designated 30-acre territories from May 1 to August 15.</p>
	<p>Where practicable and deemed safe, snags shall be left in place to preserve existing biological potential and habitat for woodpeckers, American goshawks, and other species.</p>
	<p>Where practicable and deemed safe, woody debris shall be left in place to preserve existing logs in size classes 1, 2 and 3. If logs are to be left consult with forest timber personnel to ensure material isn't left in a manner that shall encourage harmful insect infestation.</p>
	<p>If an active wolverine den is found within the project area (either during construction or operations), coordination with the Forest Service biologist shall occur to ensure that appropriate protections (e.g., buffers) are put in place.</p>
<p>Soils, Geohydrology, Hydrology, and Wetlands</p>	<p>Construction workers shall not have dogs on site to prevent potential harassment of wildlife.</p>
	<p>A site visit and field-fitting of planned projects, paths and administrative routes shall occur by forest personnel before construction may begin.</p>
	<p>All wetlands within the vicinity of any ground disturbing activities or tree felling should be clearly delineated and flagged by a qualified individual prior to construction so they can be avoided by construction activity to mitigate impacts.</p>
	<p>As required, GTR shall obtain all federal, state, and local permits when installing stream and wetland crossings and ensure they meet permit requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, Clean Water Act 404 permitting.</p>
<p>Wastewater systems for on-mountain guest service facilities shall be designed by a qualified engineer to meet or exceed all Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) and EPA standards and regulations. Where necessary, systems shall incorporate treatment technologies to minimize nutrient loading in Karst topography or waterways. Final design selection (e.g., septic vs. sanitary sewer line to base) shall be based on a site-specific geotechnical and engineering analysis to ensure the feasibility, protection of groundwater resources, and protection of downstream Public Water Systems.</p>	

Resource	Project Design Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;">Soils, Geohydrology, Hydrology, and Wetlands</p>	<p>To mitigate impacts to approved facilities from unknown sinkholes or karst formations, final civil geo-technical engineering review of approved facility sites and ground around the sites shall occur. GTR shall coordinate with Forest Service Engineering specialists to confirm final engineering design.</p>
	<p>Prior to construction of projects in Rick’s Basin, South Bowl, and in the Papoose Creek Watershed a dye tracer test shall be completed to determine connection to Public Water Systems, in order to determine BMPs that should be implemented to minimize erosion, sedimentation, and potential impacts from septic systems. Refer to the Impacts to Groundwater Report for dye tracer testing considerations.</p>
	<p>Vehicle and equipment staging areas shall be located outside of the AIZ and away from wetlands, streams, and drainages to the extent practicable. Petroleum products, hazardous materials, and chemicals shall be stored in designated areas with secondary containment, at least 150 feet from streams, wetlands, and other water bodies. Refueling operations shall occur in designated areas with spill containment measures in place.</p>
	<p>In areas where foundations, lift tower footings or other constructed features are no longer needed, constructed material (i.e. concrete footings, tower pads, etc.) shall be removed to below ground surface to either a minimum of 12 inches or if the surrounding areas has shallower soil a depth that is consistent with the areas immediately adjacent to the structure. These sites shall then be backfilled and graded to match the surrounding topography, striving to meet a 50% ground cover over disturbed areas.</p>
	<p>Locate and design administrative routes to avoid or minimize adverse effects to soil, water quality, and riparian resources. Locate administrative routes to fit the terrain and limit the need for excavation. Locate administrative routes on stable geology with well-drained soils. Avoid hydric soils, inner gorges, overly steep slopes, and unstable landforms to the extent practicable. Avoid sensitive areas such as riparian areas, wetlands, meadows, bogs, and fens, to the extent practicable. Locate administrative routes as far from waterbodies as practicable, with a minimum number of crossings and connections between the administrative route and the waterbody. Examples of crossings include culverts, bridges, arched pipes, low-water crossings, vented fords, and permeable fills. Crossing materials and construction shall vary based on the type of access required, duration of need, and volume of use expected. Crossings should be designed and installed to provide for flow of water, bedload, and large woody debris, desired aquatic organism passage, and to minimize disturbance to the surface and shallow groundwater resources. Design the administrative route surface drainage system to intercept, collect, and remove water from the administrative route surface and surrounding slopes in a manner that minimizes concentrated flow in ditches, culverts, and over fill slopes and administrative route surfaces.</p>
	<p>As necessary reference National BMPs for NFS lands. Specifically, Road-2. Road Location and Design, Road-3. Road Construction and Reconstruction, Road-4. Road Operations and Maintenance, Road-7. Stream Crossings, and Road-8. Snow Removal and Storage https://www.fs.usda.gov/naturalresources/watershed/pubs/FS_National_Core_BMPs_April2012.pdf</p>
	<p>Avoid or minimize adverse effects to soil, water quality, and riparian resources during the construction, operation, and maintenance of ski runs and lifts. Locate ski runs and lifts on stable geology and soils to minimize risk of slope failures. Avoid wetlands and riparian areas when locating ski runs and lifts wherever practicable. Incorporate suitable measures in the design and construction of ski runs, including consideration of runoff of additional water from snowmaking, to avoid or minimize undesirable increases in runoff. Maintain desired ground cover. Site specific plans shall be approved by forest personnel prior to implementation and the Forest Service Soils and/or Hydrologist should be consulted where projects overlap these resources as identified in the Construction Implementation Plan. Revegetation success shall be monitored in the seasons following implementation, with adjustments being made as necessary.</p>
	<p>As necessary reference National BMPs for NFS lands. Specifically Rec-10. Ski Runs and Lifts: https://www.fs.usda.gov/naturalresources/watershed/pubs/FS_National_Core_BMPs_April2012.pdf</p>
<p>Avoid or minimize adverse effects to soil, water quality, and riparian resources at all stages of the snowmaking process. Manage snowmaking and snow farming to avoid or minimize slope failures and gully erosion on the hillslopes and excessive bank erosion and sediment in receiving streams. Limit snowmaking on graded terrain to the extent practicable to minimize surface runoff and subsequent erosion from reduced infiltration capacity. Transport water to the forested slopes in the least disruptive manner. Design snowmaking</p>	

Resource	Project Design Criteria
Soils, Geohydrology, Hydrology, and Wetlands	<p>systems to return runoff water to the source from which it was removed, as practicable. Avoid inter-basin transfer of waters, where practicable, to maintain original duration, magnitude, and patterns of runoff in affected watersheds. Avoid contaminating return water with chemicals or other pollutants. Monitor all aspects of the process and correct problems as they occur to avoid or minimize long-term effects. Regularly inspect snowmaking lines and equipment to prevent accidental discharges and erosion due to equipment failure.</p>
	<p>During construction and maintenance, stockpile topsoil and organic matter separate from subsoil to the extent possible for redistribution, stabilization, and rehabilitation of the site after construction.</p>
	<p>Prior to construction, soil surveys and measurements of thicknesses of A or organic horizons shall be completed within the disturbance area to ensure no net loss of soil organic matter. GTR shall hire a qualified soil scientist to complete soil surveys and measurements. Reports shall be submitted as specified in the Construction Implementation Plan.</p>
	<p>Employ a BMP program to protect public water systems (PWSs) that have source water areas located within the permit area. The first BMP approach is to avoid sensitive areas or highly erosive soils to the extent practicable; Next, proven hillslope/land BMPs shall be applied to minimize runoff, erosion, and sediment delivery to streams. Lastly, Sediment detention and water settling ponds shall be constructed to minimize runoff and sediment delivery off site towards downstream resources. Sensitive areas include the Aquatic Influence Zone (AIZ) near streams or other water features. Consult with the PWS managers in the planning and project design.</p>
	<p>Administrative routes, trails, or other disturbed areas should not be located on slopes that show signs of instability, such as slope failure, mass movement, or slumps. 1997 Targhee Forest Plan Soil & Water guidelines for Management Prescription 4.2 – <i>Special Use Permit Recreation Sites</i>: Avoid new construction on unstable or highly erosive soils</p>
	<p>For projects that increase road/administrative route traffic or require administrative route use by heavy construction equipment, administrative route surfacing should be applied near stream/drainage crossings as needed to harden the administrative route surface and minimize sediment delivery.</p>
	<p>Soil-disturbing activities shall be avoided during periods of rain or wet soils. Heavy equipment may be operated within unit boundaries only when soil moisture is below the plastic limit, or protected by at least 1 foot of packed snow or 6 inches of frozen soil. Rutting caused by equipment operation should not exceed six to eight inches in depth (wet condition) over more than ten percent of the operating area. No equipment operations should take place when ground conditions are wet enough that there is a risk of such rutting (for logging operations – reference the 1997 Forest Plan as necessary (page III-33).</p>
	<p>If logging over the snow, snow depth should be a minimum of 1 foot, continuously packed (i.e., not patchy) and sufficient enough to prevent vehicles from breaking through. If logging over frozen ground, a minimum of 6 inches of continuous frozen ground should be present to prevent/minimize soil disturbance.</p>
	<p>During site preparation treatments, avoid disturbing concentrated areas of soil wood to the greatest degree feasible.</p>
	<p>Runoff from administrative routes should drain through a filter such as a vegetated buffer strip, slash windrow, silt fence, or detention basin. If a filter is not present, one shall be installed. Cross drains shall be installed on administrative routes to disperse runoff into filter strips.</p>
	<p>Decommission unnecessary administrative route and trail segments when no longer in use or impractical, implement suitable measures to re-establish stable slope contours and surface and subsurface hydrologic pathways where necessary to the extent practicable to avoid or minimize adverse effects to soil, water quality, and riparian resources. These measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing drainage structures. • Recontouring and stabilizing cut slopes and fill material.

Resource	Project Design Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;">Soils, Geohydrology, Hydrology, and Wetlands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reshaping the channel and streambanks at crossing sites to pass expected flows without scouring or ponding, minimize potential for undercutting or slumping of streambanks, and maintain continuation of channel dimensions and longitudinal profile through the crossing site. • Restoring or replacing streambed materials to a particle size distribution suitable for the site. • Restoring floodplain function. <p>As necessary, reference the AIZ direction contained within the 1997 Forest Plan (Page III-110).</p>
	<p>Use suitable measures to avoid or minimize scour and erosion of stream channels, and crossing structures and foundations, to maintain the stability of the channel and banks.</p>
	<p>Minimize grading or recontouring of hill slopes to maintain intact soil horizons and infiltrative properties.</p>
	<p>To protect hydrologic resources, locate burn piles outside the AIZ.</p>
	<p>Use suitable measures to direct overland flow on slopes into areas with intact soil horizons and sufficient vegetation to encourage infiltration and disconnect overland flow from waterbodies.</p>
	<p>Tree removal, excavation and grading should be minimized in the AIZ. Excavated material should not be stored in the AIZ.</p>
	<p>Locate and construct log landings in such a way to minimize the amount of excavation needed and to reduce the potential for soil erosion. Design landings to have proper drainage. After use, treat landings to disperse runoff and prevent surface erosion and encourage revegetation.</p>
	<p>For ground-disturbing activities near perennial and intermittent streams and ephemeral draws, connected disturbed areas (CDA) should be minimized by draining administrative routes, administrative route ditches, and other disturbed areas to undisturbed soils or vegetation rather than directly to streams and ephemeral draws. Drainage from disturbed areas should be modified as necessary using natural topography, rolling dips, waterbars, ditch-relief culverts, etc., to disconnect disturbed areas from streams.</p>
	<p>Vegetative buffers should be maintained adjacent to intermittent or perennial drainages and wetlands as well as within the AIZ. Where avoidance of the vegetative buffer is not possible, disturbance should be minimized.</p>
	<p>Culverts should not be installed and ground-disturbing activities should not be conducted near streams during spring runoff, or during periods of heavy precipitation.</p>
	<p>Rocks, wood, or other material should not be added or moved in streams or lakes except if these actions maintain or improve stream health. Stream bed and banks should not be altered.</p>
	<p>Hiking and biking trails should not be routed directly down the fall line or routed down the bottom of an ephemeral draw or other low spot. Install and maintain suitable drainage measures to collect and disperse runoff and avoid or minimize erosion of trail surface and adjacent areas. Install drain dips or grade reversals, especially near stream/drainage crossings. Steep areas should have a higher frequency of drainage features.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid sensitive areas, such as riparian areas, wetlands, fens, stream crossings, inner gorges, and unstable areas to the extent practicable. • Use suitable measures to mitigate trail impacts to the extent practicable where sensitive areas are unavoidable. • Use suitable measures to hydrologically disconnect trails from waterbodies to the extent practicable. • Design, construct, and maintain trail width, grades, curves, and switchbacks suitable to the terrain and designated use. • Assess trail condition at regular intervals to identify drainage and trail surface maintenance needs to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to soil, water quality, and riparian resources.

Resource	Project Design Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect slope stability in the vicinity of intermediate and advanced-level trails, trails shall be constructed so that the distance between drainage diversion outfalls (such as rolling dips or culverts), does not become longer than 50 to 100 feet.
Wilderness	GTR shall continue to maintain access gates and closures that prohibit guests from accessing the JSW through non-designated access points in accordance with the Operation and Boundary Management Plan.
	GTR shall continue to prohibit overnight backpackers on lifts that provide access to the JSW in accordance with the Operation and Boundary Management Plan.
	The boundary of the JSW shall be flagged and marked, specifically near Fred’s Mountain Top Guest Facility, so as to not allow material from higher elevations enter the lower elevation JSW. If needed, sediment fences and erosion mitigation systems shall be put in place to limit material movement into the JSW.
Livestock and Grazing	Should issues arise between the operations of existing livestock, specifically cattle, and grazing permit holders and GTR, GTR shall cooperate with the Forest Service and livestock and grazing permittee and take measures, including but not limited to, the installation of vegetative buffers and fencing to protect the interests of both permit holders as directed by the Forest Service. Any reasonable installation costs of vegetative buffers or fencing construction and maintenance shall be borne by GTR.
	GTR shall coordinate with the Forest Service and grazing permittee to sequence construction activities to avoid, to the extent practicable, eliminating all viable summer grazing forage within the Mill Creek Teton Allotment during any given grazing season. GTR shall provide advance notice to the Forest Service and grazing permittee regarding the timing and location of approved summer construction activities within areas overlapping the allotment, including expected duration and intensity of activities. Where feasible, GTR shall schedule intensive ground-disturbing activities to occur outside of peak grazing periods or in areas not actively grazed during a particular rotation cycle.
Fire and Fuels	<p>Following implementation, GTR must comply with the following Fuels Mitigation Standards for approved structures to the extent feasible or appropriate:</p> <p><u>Immediate Zone – 0 – 5’</u>: The structure and the area 0-5’ from the furthest attached exterior point of the structure; defined as a non-combustible area. This is the most important zone to take immediate action on as it is the most vulnerable to embers. Start with the structure itself then move into the landscaping section of the Immediate Zone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris and pine needles that could catch embers. Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles to prevent ember penetration. Reduce embers that could pass through vents in the eaves by installing 1/8 -inch metal mesh screening. Move any flammable material away from wall exteriors – mulch, flammable plants, leaves and needles, firewood piles – anything that can burn. <p><u>Immediate Zone – 5 – 30’</u>: 5-30’ from the furthest exterior point of the home. Landscaping/hardscaping-employing careful landscaping or creating breaks that can help influence and decrease fire behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear vegetation from under large stationary propane tanks. Create fuel breaks with driveways, walkways/paths, patios, and decks. Keep lawns and native grasses mowed to a height of four inches. Remove ladder fuels (vegetation under trees) so a surface fire cannot reach the crowns. Prune trees up to six to ten feet from the ground; for shorter trees do not exceed 1/3 of the overall tree height. Space trees to have a minimum of eighteen feet between crowns with the distance increasing with the percentage of slope. Tree placement should be planned to ensure the mature canopy is no closer than ten feet to the edge of the structure. Tree and shrubs in this zone should be limited to small clusters of a few each to break up the continuity of the vegetation across the landscape. <p><u>Extended Zone – 30 – 100’, out to 200’</u>: Landscaping – the goal here is not to eliminate fire but to interrupt fire’s path and keep flames smaller and on the ground.</p>

Resource	Project Design Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dispose of heavy accumulations of ground litter/debris.• Remove dead plant and tree material.• Remove small conifers growing between mature trees.• Trees 30 to 60 feet from the home should have at least 12 feet between canopy tops*• Trees 60 to 100 feet from the home should have at least 6 feet between the canopy tops* <p>*The crown spacing needed to reduce/prevent crown fire potential could be substantially greater due to slope, the species of trees involved and other site-specific conditions.</p>