

**GRAND TARGHEE SKI AND SUMMER RESORT
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**U.S. DISTRICT COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF SQUIRREL MEADOWS-
GRAND TARGHEE LAND EXCHANGE**

- **Forest Service has fully complied with the National Environmental Policy Act, court rules**

ALTA, Wyo. – June 13, 2003 – The Forest Service complied with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in its final supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) and its final supplemental record of decision (SROD), the U.S. District Court of Idaho ruled Tuesday in a victory for the Forest Service’s proposed Squirrel Meadows-Grand Targhee land exchange.

Based on its ruling, the court lifted an injunction which had blocked the land trade and dismissed the entire lawsuit that had sought to stop the land exchange.

“We are pleased with and appreciative of the U.S. District Court’s thorough analysis of the SEIS and SROD issued by the Forest Service,” said Grand Targhee general manager Larry Williamson. “Grand Targhee has supported the Forest Service through its process of complying with NEPA, and we are particularly satisfied with the fact that the purpose of the proposed land exchange (a proposed 400 acres of private land at Squirrel Meadows for 120 acres of FS land at the resort) never changed.”

Acquiring the wet meadow land and grizzly bear habitat at Squirrel Meadows has been a longstanding goal of the Forest Service for more than two decades, as well as the National Park Service, Teton County, Wyo., Teton County, Idaho, and the environmental community. The land exchange will ultimately protect prime grizzly bear and other wildlife habitat (deer, elk, sandhill cranes, trumpeter swans, spotted frogs, and several rare and sensitive plants) at Squirrel Meadows and within the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem grizzly bear recovery zone.

“In addition, Williamson said, “the land exchange will allow the Forest Service to concentrate on managing recreation at the resort rather than development, and the local community to be involved in the county planning process.”

The Forest Service had prepared the SEIS and SROD in response to an earlier ruling by the same court that was responsible for Tuesday’s decision. In August of 2001, the court ruled that the Forest Service complied with NEPA and the Federal Land Policy Management Act in most respects, but needed to better consider four issues affecting growth at the base area of Grand Targhee Ski Area before undertaking the land exchange.

The Forest Service studied the four issues identified by the court and released the SEIS and SROD in November of 2002. In its June 10, 2003 ruling, the court concluded that the “SEIS and SROD cure the shortcomings of the earlier EIS.” The court explained that “the Forest Service has taken a hard look at the four constraints on growth in the SEIS and SROD. Those supplemental studies remedy the flaws in the original EIS, and comply with NEPA.”

The court also let stand its earlier ruling that the Forest Service properly appraised the values of the lands to be exchanged.

The final SEIS projects that, under favorable market conditions, over the next decade Grand Targhee would develop 970 units with the land exchange and 686 units without the exchange. The difference amounts to only about five new households, or 13 new residents, per year. If market conditions are unfavorable, the SEIS projects that the level of development would decrease to 336 units with the exchange and 216 without the exchange. The difference similarly decreases to about four new households, or 10 new residents, per year.

While the development scenarios were prepared by the Forest Service, Grand Targhee has previously stated that it will not seek to develop more than 970 units with the land exchange and expects to develop 686 units without the exchange.

"It is our every intention to maintain Targhee's unique character, to protect the environment and to ultimately better serve our guests when we begin to develop the base area to provide a broader variety of lodging, dining, retail shops and ownership opportunities," Williamson said.

"The ruling by the U.S. District Court Tuesday is a very positive step forward for our community at large," Williamson added. "As the planning process moves forward, we will continue to work with both counties in Idaho and Wyoming, as well as through the Teton Area Advisory Forum (TAAF). The headway made to date on finding solutions to regional concerns that we all share has been tremendous."

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