



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Larry Williamson 307.353.2300, ext. 1300

GRAND TARGHEE SUBMITS RESORT MASTER PLAN

- **Proposed enhancements to Targhee base area officially under county review**
- **Authentic character, spirit of family resort will be maintained, Targhee officials say**

ALTA, Wyo. – Dec. 21, 2004 – Since the winter of 1969 when Grand Targhee Resort first offered powder hounds “snow from heaven,” the snowsports area has expanded in size and evolved in the activities offered, from premier cat-skiing in the winter to the eclectic bluegrass music festival in the summer.

Today, Grand Targhee, celebrating its 35th season, entered a new era. Plans for the resort’s base area revitalization that promises to enhance its unique character, broaden its appeal and maintain strong environmental standards have been submitted to Teton County. Resort officials outlined details of its proposed master plan, saying the base area development project will occur over an extended period of time.

At full build-out, Targhee is proposing 875 lodging/residential units, less than the 970 units that were analyzed in the U.S. Forest Service Final Environmental Impact Statement.

“Our downscaled submission goes to the very heart of our commitment to maintain Targhee’s authenticity, intimacy and family-style atmosphere,” said Grand Targhee general manager Larry Williamson. “After extensive analysis, we feel very comfortable

that the 875 units built over an extended period of time – always taking into consideration the strength of market demand – fit the site capacity.”

The detailed master development plan and rezoning application will be reviewed by the county. In order to accomplish the resort’s development goals, Targhee is asking Teton County for a Planned Unit Development District (PUD) for Planned Resort as well as a change in zoning. Responding to the applicable county Land Use Regulations, Grand Targhee seeks to formally establish a Master Plan to direct future development of an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable resort.

“It is very important to my family and me that Targhee always offers the optimal environment to reunite with family, friends and the outdoors,” said owner Geordie Gillett. “Targhee will be known as a base camp where our guests can connect to the multitude of outdoor adventures offered in the Teton region.”

Currently, there are 96 units at Targhee and about 32,000 square feet of guest services and amenities. Since 1995 various improvements have been made to the resort, including the expansion of terrain on Peaked Mountain, the upgrading of lifts, the improvement of the access road, and the construction of a new electrical sub-station, fiber optic lines and a state-of-the-art wastewater plant. However, the amount of lodging, guest services, and retail and dining options have not changed significantly since 1977, forcing the resort to turn winter guests away. Williamson said the proposed base area revitalization is intended to build upon these resort improvements and to address the current imbalance between infrastructure, lodging and terrain.

Targhee offers 2,412 skiable acres that are able to accommodate up to 5,130 skiers at one time (SAOT), as determined by the U.S. Forest Service. However, based on existing base area facilities, the resort is operating significantly below that number at 2,300 SAOT.

While Targhee was approved for 8,000 SAOT in the 1971 Master Plan, it does not expect to exceed 5,130 SAOT under its current U.S. Forest Service-approved Master Plan – only to meet that number – ensuring a quality experience both on and off the mountain.

“Our goal has been, and will continue to be, to ensure the natural and authentic character of Grand Targhee is preserved. We are creating a viable destination resort that can provide a one-of-a-kind, quality vacation experience to visitors year-round,” said Williamson. “We have a tremendous opportunity before us to create, with input from our surrounding communities and guided by the expertise of Teton County officials, an unparalleled resort experience the right way and we’re going to take the time to do just that.”

According to Targhee officials, they arrived at their proposed master development plan after years of extensive environmental analysis through a long and comprehensive public process that resulted in the completion of the Squirrel Meadows-Grand Targhee land exchange. It was perhaps one of the most studied public land trades in history. Over 15 specialists, more than 30 referral agencies, and over 1,500 members of the public, prepared, reviewed and commented on the wide range of potential impacts relative to the land exchange alternatives, including all aspects of the physical and biological environment, cultural and aesthetic resources, and all the elements of the socioeconomic environment. And more recently, Targhee has engaged in months of analysis on the socioeconomic impacts of the base area development, transportation studies, and analysis of affordable and employee housing needs.

In addition, the Teton County Department of Planning and Development recently called for an environmental analysis (EA) of Targhee’s proposed development. Jackson-based Headwaters Ecology, Inc. prepared the EA earlier this summer after several site visits and review of existing environmental documents. The EA is included in Targhee’s land use application.

“We are committed to maintaining a sustainable environment at Grand Targhee Resort. In addition to our commitment to minimize impacts on the environment during construction, we are committed to sustainable design aspects by exploring ‘green’ building techniques,” said Williamson.

What is proposed?

Grand Targhee will be a stronger year-round resort that is a gateway to a wealth of one-of-a-kind seasonal and varied outdoor experiences that the region has to offer. Targhee will be known as a base camp where people connect to the multiple outdoor opportunities of the Teton region. Grand Targhee has submitted a development plan featuring a small-scale pedestrian-friendly mountain resort with a variety of accommodations. A lively resort center will feature a mix of lodging, guest services, retail and dining options. The resort design includes numerous opportunities to connect to the outdoor and mountain environment visually and physically.

The 120-acre parcel contains no natural streams or wetlands, no old growth forest and no significant wildlife habitat. It is dotted with existing resort improvements and traversed by existing roads and utilities. Of these 120 acres, the core development area is 35 acres, and it will contain almost all resort facilities and buildings, including visitor parking. More than 61 percent of Targhee’s proposed development will be located in areas that currently have buildings or some type of activity. Twenty percent of the 120-acre site will be open space.

Of the 875 units proposed at build-out, the types and numbers of units are as follows:

- 240 lodging units
- 472 condominium units
- 75 townhouses
- 41 cabins
- 47 single family lots

“Providing a variety of opportunities for quality units resulting in high occupancy at Grand Targhee, including short-term rentals, timeshare and fractional ownership, is key to our base area development,” explained Williamson. “The energy within the village will

draw increased destination guests, not only providing customers for Targhee’s retail shops and restaurants, but the businesses and lodging facilities throughout Teton Valley, as well.”

“A revitalized base area at Grand Targhee Resort will diversify and expand the tourism business in both Teton County, Wyo. and Teton County, Idaho,” said Williamson.

“Economic growth will not be limited to Targhee alone. Lodged guests in Jackson and Teton Valley, Idaho are anticipated to grow at a rate of 1 percent annually. The commercial uses developed at Grand Targhee Resort will be specific to the needs and desires of a destination tourist, and will be complementary to, not competitive with, the commercial offerings found in the nearby communities of Driggs, Alta, Victor and Tetonina.”

Williamson added that retail and restaurant spaces and other business opportunities will be made available to locals.

Taking care of Targhee’s employees

Resort officials say that creating a successful affordable and employee housing plan must reflect the housing markets of Targhee’s surrounding communities within both Teton County, Wyo. and Teton County, Idaho, as well as meet the demands of the resort.

“We are very proud of our high employee retention rate – one of the strongest in the industry,” said Williamson. “We are also sensitive to the advantages and disadvantages our unique location affords – distant from Teton County, Wyoming community services that won’t be duplicated at Targhee, such as a hospital, school, grocery store or library. Our employees want and need to live in close proximity to these services.”

Currently proposed are rental units at the resort for up to 40 employees who are essential to have on-site. Further, with nearly 100 percent of Targhee’s employees currently living in Idaho, the resort would like to partner with the Teton Valley, Idaho communities – particularly Driggs and Victor – to provide Targhee with employee and affordable

housing. Williamson points out that there is more land in Teton Valley, services are available and housing is more affordable than in Teton County, Wyo.

Progressive transportation and parking strategies will be implemented at Targhee Analysis, as outlined in Targhee's master plan submission as to how to best maintain current traffic flow and create a positive parking situation for overnight guests, day skiers and employees, has resulted in very thorough, progressive plans to ensure a pedestrian-friendly resort supplemented by an internal shuttle service.

Ski Hill Road, originating in Driggs, Idaho, is the vehicular route to Targhee. The traffic generation for the resort at build-out will be less than that estimated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in their design and reconstruction of Ski Hill Road. As such, Ski Hill Road has been designed and constructed to accommodate the projected traffic from the resort. Transportation demand management strategies will be implemented by Targhee to further reduce potential traffic impacts on Ski Hill Road. These include a progressive employee transit system that will increase the employee ridership as the resort develops. As public transit services are expanded in the region, public and private partnerships will be pursued to eventually increase the percentage of day guests, lodged guests, and residents served.

Parking will be provided to support the accommodation and activities at the resort. It will be complemented by the alternative modes of transportation described above, such as the resort-operated shuttles that serve the communities of Teton Valley, Idaho and Jackson, Wyoming. Almost all future residences will feature ski-in/ski-out access eliminating the need to access the slopes by car.

Targhee submitted its master plan application Tuesday to the Teton County Planning and Development department which will initiate the review process.

-###-