

**REVIEW OF POTENTIAL ECONOMIC  
EFFECTS OF GRAND TARGHEE  
MOUNTAIN IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT ON  
TETON COUNTY, IDAHO**

**Chris Neher**

**Resource Economist**

**April 2025**



## INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this report is to identify the potential economic effects of Grand Targhee's mountain improvements project on Teton County Idaho. These potential effects are outlined in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects (DEIS) and supporting documents.<sup>1 2</sup> This report also comments on an earlier report commissioned by Teton County Idaho and prepared by ECONorthwest, and provides the context needed for evaluating that report along with other pertinent observations.

This report has been prepared by Chris Neher, an independent natural resource economics consultant (vita attached).

## SUMMARY FINDINGS

- The Grand Targhee Resort (GTR) has been operating as a ski area for over 50 years. Over that time, it has steadily increased both winter and summer use levels. While GTR is located in Wyoming, the communities of Driggs and Victor Idaho, along with Teton County Idaho (TCI) have greatly benefited from the ongoing spending by GTR visitors in the local economy as well as from infrastructure investments by GTR in TCI.
- TCI and Driggs/Victor are "gateway communities" to the amenities supplied by GTR and other nearby recreational attractions. Gateway communities and their adjacent natural amenities have a symbiotic relationship: the amenities (such as ski areas or national parks) provide a natural draw to visitors, and the communities provide economic goods and services to supply them. This relationship plays out in a positive way in many communities across the West and beyond.

## SUMMARY OF CURRENT ONGOING ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF GTR OPERATIONS

- The DEIS estimates that a 5-year average annual impact of GTR visitor spending to three Idaho counties (Teton, Bonneville, and Madison) from current operations contribute 323 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs to the area. This activity also contributes \$9.8 million in personal income and

---

<sup>1</sup> Caribou-Targhee NF. "Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects." Teton County, WY. March 2025.

<sup>2</sup> SE Group. "Social-Economic and Environmental Justice Technical Report for the Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects: Environmental Impact Statement". June 2023.

\$28.3 million in total sales to the Idaho counties.<sup>3</sup> This ongoing annual economic impact to Idaho supports residents, the businesses they patronize, and by extension local government through sales, lodging, and use taxes.<sup>4</sup>

- In addition to impacts associated with the money directly spent by GTR visitors in TCI and surrounding counties, GTR itself spends heavily in TCI to support its ongoing operations. In 2024, GTR reported spending \$21 million directly in Teton County Idaho. This substantial injection of money into the local TCI economy occurs every year, with some variation. The 2024 GTR spending in TCI was divided roughly as 54% payroll, 38% purchases from local businesses, 7% for provision of employee housing, and 1% for transportation.<sup>5</sup>
- In addition to the annual direct spending in TCI by GTR associated with normal operations, GTR also has invested in the past, and plans future spending, for infrastructure in the county. These investments include \$8 million for employee housing in Driggs, \$86,000 for buses, and a planned \$6 million investment in the future 5th street apartment project. Additionally, GTR has pledged to contribute \$115,000 to Teton County roads, and \$130,000 to expand the Driggs transit center.<sup>6</sup>
- Currently, as of April 2025, GTR has \$38.8 million in existing contracts and commitments for work to be completed in the next few years. These funds will also be paid to businesses with operations in TCI.<sup>7</sup>

## SUMMARY OF PROJECTED LOCAL ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF GTR MOUNTAIN IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT UNDER ALTERNATIVE 2

The GTR Mountain Improvements Project DEIS provides a careful analysis of the local (3-county) area including Teton County Idaho. The DEIS projects annual impacts associated with the proposed improvements project that would be in addition to current economic impacts noted above.

- For the proposed action (Alternative 2) the DEIS predicts economic activity from GTR operations by 2033 will account for an additional 274 FTE jobs in the Idaho counties, \$10.6 million in personal income, and \$31.1 million in total economic output (sales). Again, the large share of these impacts is most likely to be centered in TCI as it is the sole gateway to GTR.

---

<sup>3</sup> SE Group. 2023. Tables 3.2.6 & 3.2.7. pp 21-22

<sup>4</sup> As the county bordering and providing all access to GTR, Teton County Idaho likely captures a disproportionately large share of this 3-county estimated economic impact.

<sup>5</sup> Personal Communication, Brad Grover, GTR. April 2, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

- These predicted impacts to the Idaho counties would be in addition to the current impact of GTR on employment, income, and sales in the counties.
- Just as the DEIS predicts economic impacts of the proposed GTR mountain improvements project on TCI, it also provides information on impacts to neighboring Teton County Wyoming (TCW). For the proposed (Alternative 2) improvements, the DEIS projects TCW would experience an additional 340 FTE jobs, \$16.9 million in personal income annually, and \$43.5 million in additional total economic output (sales).

## SUMMARY COMMENTS ON ECONORTHWEST REPORT

In July 2022, the consulting firm ECONorthwest completed an analysis and report for Teton County, Idaho (TCI) entitled “Effects of Proposed Grand Targhee Development on Public Services and Housing Markets in Teton County, ID.” The report had a narrow focus in economic terms, and while carefully developing the topics within its focus, it by no means addressed the full scope of the significance or impacts of historic and proposed future operations of Grand Teton Resort (GTR) on the economics of Teton County Idaho (TCI).

- The ECONorthwest report is a partial economic analysis that only focuses on one sector (essentially local taxes) and thus presents a biased and inaccurate view of the totality of economic effects of any action. Fiscal challenges to TCI are structural in nature and not largely due to GTR.
- Overall, the ECONorthwest report is severely limited in scope, generally tentative in its conclusions, and already somewhat outdated.
- The ECONorthwest report does a good job of describing the local taxing structures of ID and WY governments and how differences between them allow WY to capture more tax revenue from ski operations at GTR.
- Similarly, the report accurately describes the housing supply and affordability situation in TCI. However, different taxing structures are not within the control of GTR, nor is the current housing situation in TCI in any significant way due to GTR.
- Any fair analysis of the past, current, and potential future impacts of GTR and its proposed mountain improvements project must also include accurate estimates of direct spending in the TCI economy by GTR visitors as well as by GTR itself. These economic impacts on income, jobs, and sales are large and ongoing.

## SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS ON HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND COST IN TETON COUNTY IDAHO

While the ECONorthwest report describes the relatively tight and high-cost housing environment in TCI, it fails to include in an organized way the necessary context that largely explains the sources of the current housing environment.

Rather, it alludes to GTR as the proximate cause of housing scarcity and prices and implies that future GTR mountain improvements would significantly worsen the situation. A review of housing trends as well as the conclusions from the DEIS found the following:

- Exogenous social, cultural, and economic factors outside the control of Grand Targhee Resort are the cause of the tight, expensive housing market in TCI.
- Structural causes of the tight, expensive housing market in TCI are the result of nationwide and statewide trends rather than resulting from actions by Grand Targhee Resort. The entire State of Idaho has seen a 162% increase in housing prices between 2015 and 2024.
- The higher cost of housing in TCI is substantially driven by residents working in WY who seek lower housing costs in Idaho, not because of actions by Grand Targhee Resort.
- Short-term rental conversions, i.e., the transition of rental properties into the AirBnB pool, have put substantial pressure on housing demand in TCI in recent years. That phenomenon is separate from, and not a result of, Grand Targhee Resort.
- Grand Targhee Resort has in the past, and plans in the future, to fund the construction and maintenance of housing for a large share of temporary workers at the resort, significantly limiting pressures by GTR employees on the TCI housing market. GTR invested \$8 million in the past for employee housing in Driggs, ID, and plans an additional \$6 million investment in the future 5th street apartment project.
- The impact of new workers associated with implementation of the Grand Targhee mountain improvements project would likely be trivial in the context of major drivers of housing demand in TCI.
- Grand Targhee Resort is a relatively minor player in cultural and economic pressures driving population and demand in TCI.

## SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO THE ECONORTHWEST FINDINGS:

The ECONorthwest report is not a comprehensive analysis of the cost and benefits or regional economic impact of either historical GTR operations on Teton County Idaho (TCI) or predicted impacts of the GTR mountain improvements project on the TCI economy.

The report makes clear that its goal is limited to estimating likely impacts of the GTR mountain improvements project on the “Public Services and Housing Markets in Teton County, ID.” This narrow focus on costs associated with governmental fiscal impacts and the housing market ignores a broad category of benefits to businesses, workers, and associated tax revenues from economic activity generated by GTR.

While carefully done as far as it goes, the ECONorthwest report is speculative and tentative in many conclusions and simply evaluates the fiscal impacts of GTR mountain improvements project within the acknowledged constraints of Idaho Taxing structure.

The ECONorthwest report with its narrow focus addressed four particular aspects of GTR operations and the “potential” impact on county and city finances of the proposed mountain improvements project.

1. Impact on costs of garbage disposal
2. Impact on costs of emergency services
3. Impact on road maintenance
4. Impact on the housing market

All these impact areas were framed in the context of “would GTR mountain improvements project shift costs of providing services to the resort disproportionately onto residents of TCI? The report concluded the following:


1. Current garbage contract rates were fair and equitable, but the authors worried that disposal of future construction waste might shift some costs to the residents of TCI. The authors offered no significant evidence that this would happen. In any event, disposal rates for GTR are a matter of contract, and can be renegotiated if needed.
2. The report notes that current EMS contracts between TCI and TCW are based on share of emergency calls with a substantial \$20,000 annual escalation. The report parses whether the actual share of total calls to WY is 12% or 13% and notes that under some of its aggressive GTR growth projections the \$20K annual escalation would not cover all the potential costs of the calls. Basically, the report is saying that now and for the next few years TCW is likely fully covering the costs of the EMS services provided by TCI—BUT under aggressive growth scenarios, it might not.

Again, this is a contract agreement between TCW and TCI. If and when TCI feels and can document that they are being underpaid for the service they provide to WY, renegotiation is called for. However, this is outside the control of GTR.

3. The estimated cost of road maintenance to TCI from GTR mountain improvements project is particularly concerning. Missing is data on historic investments in the road sections addressed, context on maintenance backlogs due to a myriad of issues, or a direct and proportionate connection to GTR of any needed repairs.

Needed upgrades are not unique to the few miles of connectors and roadway discussed in the report. A 2024 report found that 14% of Idaho's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and 5% of Idaho's bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient conditions.<sup>8</sup> State, county, and city road and bridge departments work hard with often inadequate resources. Projects are prioritized given available resources. GTR is not a new ski area. It has been in operation for over 50 years with steadily increasing visitation over time. This is ample time for recognition of future challenges with the feeder road system, planning for improvements and prioritizing those improvements in the funding cycles.

Any analysis of the costs of road maintenance due to GTR would need to

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping blue triangles and polygons, creating a layered, mountain-like effect. It is positioned on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the text block.

A NOTE ON ECONORTHWEST GTR GROWTH PROJECTIONS: THE CAREFUL ANALYSIS CONTAINED IN THE USFS DEIS FOR PROPOSED GTR EXPANSION PREDICTS GTR VISITATION WITHOUT EXPANSION WOULD GROW AT 1% ANNUALLY THROUGH 2033. THE DEIS FURTHER ESTIMATES THAT WITH THE EXPANSION GTR VISITATION WILL GROW AT 3.9% ANNUALLY. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXPANSION AND NO EXPANSION GROWTH IS 2.9% ANNUALLY THROUGH 2033. HOWEVER, THE ECONORTHWEST REPORT PRESENTS THREE GROWTH SCENARIOS: A LOW OF 1% THAT MATCHES CURRENT GROWTH LEVELS WITHOUT EXPANSION, A MODERATE OF 3.5% AND A HIGH OF 6.4% ANNUAL GROWTH THROUGH 2032. THE MODERATE AND HIGH PROJECTIONS LEAD TO ANNUAL VISITATION LEVELS IN 2032 THAT ARE 20% HIGHER (FOR THE MODERATE GROWTH SCENARIO AND 58% HIGHER (FOR THE HIGH GROWTH SCENARIO) THAN THE DETAILED PROJECTIONS IN THE DEIS. THESE EXCESSIVELY HIGH GROWTH PROJECTIONS DRIVE MUCH OF THE ANALYSIS.

---

<sup>8</sup> TRIP, A National Transportation Research Nonprofit. [https://tripnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/TRIP\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_ID.pdf](https://tripnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/TRIP_Fact_Sheet_ID.pdf)

recognize this history and allocate use on the road segments among users (GTR visitors, Alta residents, local use) appropriately. The way the issue is presented in the report seems more like a “wish list” for the question, “what would you do to improve these roads and what would it cost?” The wishes may be appropriate, but the allocation of responsibility is wholly inadequate in my view.

4. The ECONorthwest report does a good analysis of the housing market and housing affordability in TCI. Their conclusions are not unknown: housing availability has not matched housing demand in recent years leading to increased housing prices. An increasing share of TCI residents are considered “cost burdened”. Meaning the household pays more than 30% of their income in housing costs.

What is either briefly mentioned or ignored in the report are the structural causes of the tight, expensive housing market in TCI. These include:

- a. National trends in housing prices. The entire state of Idaho has seen a 162% increase in housing prices between 2015 and 2024. This statewide and national trend is a huge share of the 192% increase in housing prices in TCI over the same period.<sup>9</sup>
- b. As noted in the DEIS, Idaho is heavily linked to proximity to Teton County, WY (TCW). Approximately 38 percent of all workers living in Teton County, ID (3,200 workers) travel to Teton County, WY for work. The higher cost of housing in TCI is substantially driven by residents working in WY, seeking lower housing costs in Idaho.<sup>10</sup>
- c. Short term rental conversions have put substantial pressure on housing demand in TCI in recent years. These rentals can provide an attractive alternative to homeowners when compared to long-term rental income. A 2021 survey of TCI renters found that 18% of those surveyed had been forced to move because their existing long-term rental was being converted to a short-term rental at significantly higher costs.<sup>11</sup> Short-term rental conversions reduce the available stock of long-term housing while also increasing rental rates on the existing housing stock (due to increased demand).

---

<sup>9</sup> St. Louis Federal Reserve. <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/ATNHPIUS16081A>

<sup>10</sup> SE Group 2021. P. 31.

<sup>11</sup> DEIS p. 123.



TCI housing is indeed expensive. However, the cause of high housing prices in the county is much more heavily influenced by statewide and national trends, dislocated workers from WY, and short-term rental conversions than from operations of GTR either past, current, or future. Finally, GTR has in the past, and plans for the future, to provide housing for a large share of temporary workers at the resort, significantly limiting pressures by GTR employees on the TCI housing market.

**BOTTOM LINE ON HOUSING:** the mountain improvements project of GTR over an extended period of time would bring some new workers to TCI. However, the impacts of these new workers would likely be trivial in the context of the major drivers of housing demand in the county described above.



GTR MOUNTAIN IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT IN THE CONTEXT OF COUNTY GROWTH PROJECTIONS: AS DETAILED IN THE DEIS, A VERY CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE PROJECTS THE POPULATION OF TETON COUNTY, ID TO INCREASE BY 1,650 NEW RESIDENTS BY 2033 WITHOUT ANY GTR EXPANSION. EVEN IF ALL PROJECTED NEW EMPLOYMENT GENERATED IN THE COUNTY BY THE GTR EXPANSION WERE FILLED BY EMPLOYEES MOVING TO AND LIVING IN THE COUNTY, THIS LEVEL OF GROWTH WOULD STILL BE WELL WITHIN THE PROJECTED RANGE OF NATURAL GROWTH OF THE COUNTY POPULATION OVER THE PERIOD. IN FACT, HOWEVER, THE DEIS PREDICTS THAT ONLY 54% OF THIS NEW EMPLOYMENT WILL OCCUR IN IDAHO (274 OF 614 NEW FTE JOBS). THIS LEVEL OF GROWTH IS LESS THAN 9% OF THE CURRENT AND ONGOING IMPACT OF GROWTH FROM RESIDENTS OF TCI WORKING IN WY.

The ECONorthwest analysis frames GTR and the proposed mountain improvements project as “the straw that broke the camel’s back” in terms of economic challenges in Teton County, ID. In truth GTR is a relatively minor player in cultural and economic pressures driving population and demand in the county. Other more important drivers are the widespread shortage of affordable housing throughout the country and particularly in amenity rich areas of the West, and demand for more affordable housing from employees working in high-cost neighboring communities in Wyoming. That is not to say, however, that GTR does not play an important role in the Teton County, ID economy.

## THE POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF GTR AND THE PROPOSED MOUNTAIN IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT ON IDAHO AND TETON COUNTY, ID LARGELY IGNORED BY ECONORTHWEST

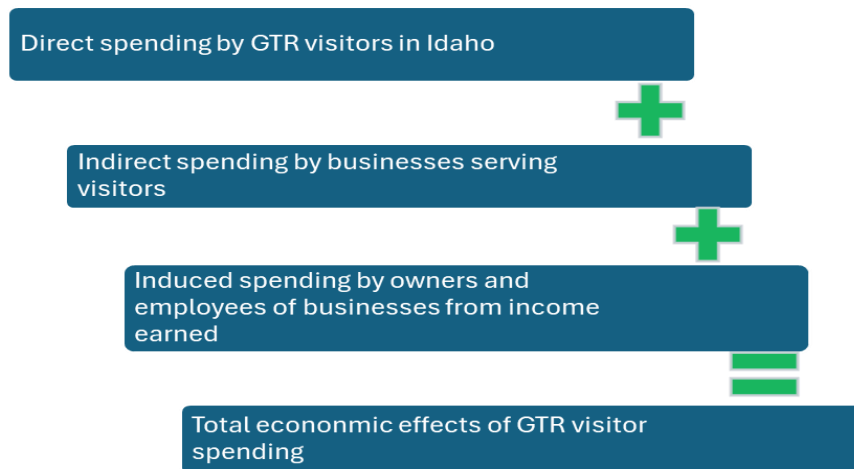
The narrow focus of the ECONorthwest report on fiscal impacts to TCI and possible impacts on housing in the county by necessity generally ignores large and ongoing positive impacts of GTR operations on businesses, jobs, and income in the county. Any fair economic analysis of current economic impacts to the county must include this type of analysis. The recently released DEIS does provide substantial clarity on these expected impacts.

Two categories of impacts largely ignored by ECONorthwest are the direct, indirect, and induced impacts on employment, income, and sales in the county associated with GTR visitor spending, and impacts associated with direct spending on wages, contracts, and infrastructure by GTR within the county.

### IMPACTS OF GTR VISITOR SPENDING IN IDAHO

The DEIS does a careful job of fully accounting for and predicting the impacts both of current GTR operations and the proposed GTR mountain improvements project. Using a regional economic impact modeling framework, the DEIS predicts levels of visitor spending-driven economic activity (employment, personal income, and total output/sales) under both the Alternative 1 (no action) scenario and the Alternative 2 (preferred mountain improvements project) scenario.

When visitors spend money in a local economy the impact of that spending is not limited to the dollars originally spent. Rather, initial visitor spending supports spending by the businesses that are patronized (for supplies and labor) as well as re-spending within the local economy by the employees and owners of the businesses from their wages and income. Therefore, the initial visitor spending is “multiplied” in its impacts throughout the local economy.



These types of economic impacts felt within gateway communities are nearly universally considered to be positive. Businesses welcome and depend on visitor spending and lobby strongly against any policies that might reduce visitation and associated visitor spending.

Table 1 shows the annual economic impact on the Idaho counties from current operations as well as the predicted future annual economic impacts of both the existing level of GTR development and the proposed mountain improvements project through 2033. These impacts are for the share of total impacts likely attributable to three counties in Idaho (Teton, Madison, and Bonneville). While Teton County has the lowest population of these three, its proximity and access to GTR suggests that the large share of these predicted impacts would be expected to accrue to this gateway county (TCI).

*Table 1. DEIS predicted annual economic impacts on Idaho counties under alternative GTR growth scenarios.*

Season	Employment	Income (millions 2033 \$)	Total Output (millions 2033 \$)
<b><i>Current Operations (5-year average)</i></b>			
Winter	283	8.60	24.8
Summer	40	1.21	3.48
Total	323	9.81	28.28
<b><i>Projected baseline (no mountain improvements project) growth—in addition to current operations</i></b>			
Winter	99	3.75	10.9
Summer	9	0.37	1.09
Total	108	4.12	11.99
<b><i>Projected mountain improvements project growth—in addition to current operations</i></b>			
Winter	250	9.71	28.51
Summer	24	0.92	2.70
Total	274	10.63	31.21

As noted in the table, GTI currently supports 323 FTE jobs, 9.81 million in labor income and 28.28 million in sales annually in the Idaho counties. The DEIS provides predictions of future (through 2033) operations as well. Current operations and level of development (no mountain improvements project) are predicted to have an additional average impact on total economic activity (sales) in the counties of \$12 million dollars per year, and support 108 jobs from growth in visitor spending through 2033. Under the proposed Alternative 2 mountain improvements project plans, an additional approximately \$20 million in annual sales and 166 jobs are predicted (for a total of \$31.2 million in added sales and 274 jobs).

These predicted increases in employment, income and sales (which include direct spending, as well as indirect and induced spending) represent business activity and employment opportunities for local Teton County residents. Additionally, this economic activity will generate local sales tax income in Driggs and Victor as well as substantial lodging tax income streams.

There are very real economic positives that come from visitor spending associated with GTR. Looking at the short-term impacts on local government finances without acknowledging the broad and widely acknowledged positives of increases in visitors and visitor spending is to present a very narrow and biased economic picture of the GTR mountain improvements project issue.

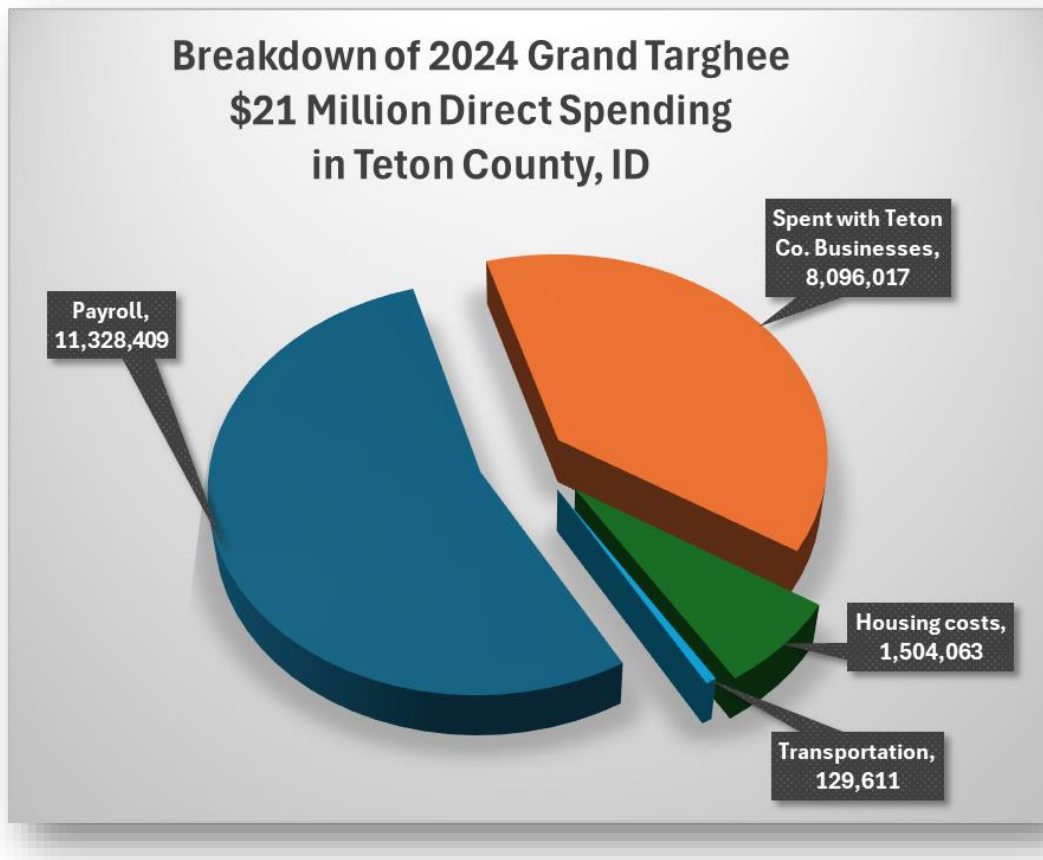
## IMPACTS OF DIRECT GTR SPENDING IN TETON COUNTY, IDAHO

In 2024, GTR reported spending \$21 million directly in Teton County Idaho.<sup>12</sup> This substantial injection of money into the local TCI economy occurs every year, with some variation. The GTR spending in TCI is divided roughly as 54% payroll, 38% purchases from local businesses, 7% for provision of employee housing, and 1% for transportation.

Just as the direct spending by visitors on the local economy becomes multiplied to include indirect and induced spending effects, the spending by GTR in TCI also results in greater, multiplied local economic impacts.

---

<sup>12</sup> Personal Communication, Brad Grover, GTR.



## IMPACTS OF GTR INVESTMENT IN TETON COUNTY, IDAHO

In addition to the annual direct spending in TCI by GTR associated with normal operations, GTR also has invested in the past, and plans future spending, for infrastructure in the county. These investments include \$8 million for employee housing in Driggs, \$86,000 for buses, and a planned \$6 million investment in the future 5th street apartment project. Additionally, GTR has pledged to contribute \$115,000 to Teton County roads, and \$130,000 to expand the Driggs transit center. Finally, GTR has \$38.8 million in existing contracts and commitments for work to be completed in the next few years. These funds will also be paid to businesses with operations in TCI.

### CONCLUSIONS:

Grand Targhee Resort is situated in a unique geographical setting—located largely in one state (WY), with sole access through gateway communities located in another state (ID). While this setting somewhat confuses the distribution of taxing authorities, it does not change the fundamental underlying fact that the gateway

communities of Driggs and Victor Idaho have in the past, and will continue to derive significant economic benefits from the visitor and other spending driven by GTR.

The ECONorthwest report is carefully done as far as it goes. However, the report's extremely narrow focus on county fiscal impacts makes it wholly insufficient for evaluating the full scope of economic impacts associated with GTR—both costs, and more importantly, benefits as well. Where the ECONorthwest authors do hazard conclusions, they are generally couched in uncertainty or based on GTR growth scenarios that are at odds with the careful analysis presented in the recently released DEIS. I would not recommend relying solely on the ECONorthwest report as a tool for assessing whether the proposed GTR mountain improvements project would positively impact the TCI economy and government finances.

A full analysis of the impacts of GTR operations and the currently considered mountain improvements project should include all spending supported by GTR in the local economies (visitors spending as well as by GTR itself) along with the indirect and induced economic activity created by this initial spending. This GTR-driven spending supports jobs, income, and business sales in the gateway communities. These local economic impacts filter through the TCI economy supporting additional local-area taxes (resort, as well as lodging) that help fund local economic services. Without significantly expanding the GTR analysis beyond that presented in the ECONorthwest report—an expansion that would include a historical perspective as well as all direct and indirect economic drivers--the very real benefits of GTR to local economic activity remains unaccounted for.

## AUTHOR

Chris Neher is a natural resource economist living in Stevensville, Montana. For the past 36 years he has worked for a private consulting firm in Missoula, MT and through the University of Montana on a broad range of natural resource economic issues. He also guided the Middle Fork of the Salmon from 1979-1989. Questions on this report can be sent to [Neher@montana.com](mailto:Neher@montana.com).

# CHRIS J. NEHER

Natural Resource Economist

Stevensville, MT 59870

E-mail: [neher@montana.com](mailto:neher@montana.com)

## EDUCATION

University of Montana	M.A. Economics	1989
University of Idaho	B.S. Business Management	1979

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2015 to present	Independent economics consultant	
1989-present	Senior Economist, Bioeconomics, Inc., Missoula, MT.	
2007-2020	Research Specialist University of Montana, Department of Mathematical Sciences, Missoula, MT.	
1989-1990, 1996	Instructor, Department of Economics, University of Montana.	

## PERSONAL

Born in Nampa, Idaho. Primary and secondary education in Nampa public schools. Married, with two adult children. Whitewater guide in Idaho, Oregon and Alaska (1977-1988).

Mr. Neher is an independent natural resource economics consultant. He also works as Senior Economist with Bioeconomics, Inc. in Missoula, MT, where he has worked for 35 years. His experience includes an appointment as Research Specialist in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at the University of Montana. His areas of specialization are environmental and natural resource economics and policy.

In addition to his economics background, Neher has wide experience with database management, complex statistical analysis and computer modeling and simulation. Neher is also very experienced at implementing complex and large-scale survey projects. Neher has been provided economic analysis support for a number of the large-scale EIS Projects, including EIS contracts on winter use management in Yellowstone NP, bison management plan for Yellowstone NP, reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone and central Idaho, reintroduction of grizzlies to the Bitterroot Ecosystem, and the long-term environmental plan for management of Glen Canyon Dam.

Neher has an extensive resume of reports and peer-reviewed publications, including articles in Water Resources Research, Environmental Management, Lake and Reservoir Management, International Journal of Wildland Fire, Marine Resource Economics, Arctic Review of Law and Policy, and Western Economic Forum. Neher served on an advisory board for the State of Idaho and offered testimony on setting appropriate grazing fees within the state. Recently, Neher consulted with Irrigation and Power Districts in Nebraska on determining the fair

market value of residential lake lot leases within the district. Neher has also consulted for the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association on river management.

Neher lives with his family on a farm in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, where they raise hay and horses.

#### **SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS**

“Incorporating passive use values in collision mitigation benefit-cost calculations: an application to deer and turtles in Minnesota.” *Environmental Economics and Policy Studies* 27, 43–60 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10018-024-00406-3> (Lead Author)

“Estimating compensation ratios for tribal resources within a habitat equivalency framework.” *Ecological Economics*, 179, 106862. Duffield, J., Neher, C., & Patterson, D.

“Convergent Validity of Alternative Dependent Variable Specifications for Individual Travel Cost Models” *Environmental Economics and Policy Studies* DOI: 10.1007/s10018-018-0231-z. (Lead Author).

“Natural Resource Valuation with a Tribal Perspective: a Case Study of the Penobscot Nation.” *Applied Economics* 51(22), 2377-2389. (Co-Author)

“Impact of sample frame on survey response rates in repeat-contact mail surveys.” *Park Science*, 34(1), pp.43-46. (Lead Author)

“Convergent validity between willingness to pay elicitation methods: an application to Grand Canyon whitewater boaters”. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 62(4), pp.611-625. (Lead Author).

“Testing the limits of temporal stability: willingness to pay values among Grand Canyon whitewater boaters across decades”. *Water Resources Research*, 53(12), pp.10108-10120 (Lead Author)

“Budgeting for the Future: The Long-Term Impacts of Short-Term Thinking in Alabama K-12 Education Funding.” *Journal of Education Finance*. 2017.Vol 42 no 4. Pp. 448-470 (Lead author)

“Economic Value of Angling on the Colorado River at Lees Ferry: Using Secondary Data to Estimate the Influence of Seasonality”. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 36 (6), 1229-1239 (Co-Author)

“Oil spill in northern waters: Trial outcomes and the long term in the case of the Exxon Valdez.” Vol 1/2014. *Arctic Review of Law and Policy*. (Co-author)



“Ecological-Economic Modeling of Changes in Fish Assemblage in a Western Montana Cold Water Reservoir System.” Report for Avista Corp. December 2016 (Lead Author)

“Colorado River Total Value Study.” Report for the National Park Service. August 2016. (Co-author)

“Economic Analysis of Glen Canyon Angler and Grand Canyon Whitewater Visitor Surveys.” Report for USGS Grand Canyon Research and Monitoring Center. July 2016. (Co-author)

“Johnson Lake Lot Lease Rate Valuation Analysis.” Report for the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District. August 2016. (Author)

“The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass Survey.” Report for the NPS Interagency Pass Program. May 2016. (Lead Author)

“Bristol Bay Wild Salmon Ecosystems: Baseline levels of economic activity and values”. 225 pp. Vol. 3, Appendix E. in U.S. EPA, An Assessment of Potential Mining Impacts on Salmon Ecosystems of Bristol Bay, Alaska. (Final Report). U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C., EPA 910-R-14-001A-C, ES, 2014. (Co-author)

“Valuation of recreation in the National Parks: Estimating micro-meta models for benefit transfer.” Western Economics Forum. 12(1): 16-30. (Co-author)

“Modeling the influence of water levels on recreational use at Lakes Mead and Powell.” Lake and Reservoir Management 29:233-246. (Lead author)  
DOI:10.1080/10402381.2013.841784

“Valuation of National Park System Visitation: The Efficient Use of Count Data Models, Meta-Analysis, and Secondary Visitor Survey Data.” Environmental Management (2013) 52:683-698. (Lead Author)

“Wildfire Impacts on National Park Visitation and the Regional Economy: a Natural Experiment in the Northern Rockies.” International Journal of Wildland Fire <http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/WF12170> . (Co-author)

“Modeling the Behavior of Marlin Anglers in the Western Pacific.” (2012) Marine Resource Economics, Vol. 27:343-357. (Co-author)

“Economic values for National Park System Resources within the Colorado River Watershed”. In Melis, T.S., Hamill, J.F., Coggins, L.C., Jr. Grams, P.E., Kennedy, T.A., Kubly, D.M. and Ralston, B.E., eds., Proceedings of the Colorado River Basin Science and Resource Management Symposium, November 18-20, 2009. U.S. Geological Survey Circular. (Co-author)

"Economics of Wolf Recovery in Yellowstone. 2008. Yellowstone Science 16(1):20-25. (Co-author)

"Integrating Economic and Ecological Models in the Greater Yellowstone Area: Application to Wolf Recovery." 2007. Pp 53-60 in Proceedings of the 8th Biennial Symposium on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Mammoth, Wyoming, October 2005. (Co-author)

"Economics of Wild Salmon Ecosystems: Bristol Bay, Alaska. In: Watson, Alan; Dean, Liese; Sproull, Janet, comps. 2006. Science and stewardship to protect and sustain wilderness values: Eighth World Wilderness Congress symposium; 2005 September 30-October 6; Anchorage, AK. Proceedings RMRS-P-000. Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. (Co-author)

"Do Fishermen Lie: Measuring Hypothetical Bias across Response Formats". Pp 86-114 in Klaus Moeltner, comp. Benefits and Costs of Resource Policies Affecting Public and Private Lands. Proceedings from the W1133 Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas, February 22-25, 2006. Nineteenth Interim Report. University of Nevada, Reno, Department of Resource Economics. (Co-author)

"Field Testing Existence Values for Riparian Ecosystems". In: Watson, Alan; Dean, Liese; Sproull, Janet, comps. 2006. Science and stewardship to protect and sustain wilderness values: Eighth World Wilderness Congress symposium; 2005 September 30-October 6; Anchorage, AK. Proceedings RMRS-P-000. Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. (Co-author)

"Integrating Landscape Scale Economic and Ecological Models in the Greater Yellowstone Area: Application to Wolf Recovery." Proceedings of the 8th Biennial Scientific Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. (Co-author)

"Willingness to Pay for Instream Flow in Montana Fisheries". Proceedings of AWRA Conference, Adaptive Management of Water Resources. Missoula, MT June 26-28, 2006. (Co-author)

"Valuation and Policy in Alaskan Sport Fisheries", Chapter 13, pp 156-185 in Tony J. Pitcher and Charles Hollingworth, eds. Recreational Fisheries: Ecological, Economic and Social Evaluation Oxford: Blackwell Science (2002). (Co-author)

"Recreation Benefits of Instream Flow: Application to Montana's Big Hole and Bitterroot Rivers", Water Resources Research Vol. 28, No. 9, pages 2169-2181, September 1992. (Co-author)

"Economics of Wolf Recovery in Yellowstone National Park". Trans. 61st No. Am. Wildl. and Natur. Resour. Conf. (1996): 285-292. (Co-author)

"Economic Analysis of National Park issues: An Assessment of the Impacts of the 1997 Floods in Yosemite Park". *Park Science* 20(1):21-23 (Spring 2000). (Lead Author)

"Profitability of Conventional and Sustainable Dryland Grain Farming in Montana" in *Planting the Future: Developing an Agriculture that Sustains Land and Community*, E. Bird et al., editors. (Iowa State University Press, 1995). (Co-author)

#### **ADDITIONAL REPORTS**

The Economic Value of Instream Flows in Montana: A Travel Cost Model Approach. Master's Thesis, University of Montana (May 1989).

Montana Deer Hunting: A Contingent Valuation Assessment of Economic Benefits to Hunters. Report for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Coauthor with John Duffield (September 1990).

Instream Flows in the Missouri River Basin: A Recreation Survey and Economic Study. Report for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Coauthor with John Duffield, Dave Patterson, and Stewart Allen (July 1990).

Market Value of Agricultural Water leased for Instream Flows. Report for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Coauthor with John Duffield (October 1990).

Net Economic Value of Instream Flows: A Regional Travel Cost Model of Montana Trout Streams. Final report for Montana Water Resources Center, Bozeman. Coauthor with John Duffield (January 1993).

Montana Waterfowl Hunting: A Contingent Valuation Assessment of Economic benefits and Hunter Attitudes. A report for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Coauthor with John Duffield (May 1991).

"Tour Information Services Logistic Regression Demand Analysis: Yellowstone National Park Contingent Valuation Test Market Study" Report for Tour Information Services, Inc. Coauthor with John Duffield. (September 1992).

An Economic Evaluation of Montana Sustainable Agricultural Practices. Report for the Northwest Area Foundation. Coauthor with John Duffield, Doug Dahlenberg, Kay Unger, and Catherine Berg (February 1993).

Economic Analysis of the Values of Surface Uses of State Lands: Fair market Value for Recreational Uses. Report for the Montana Department of State Lands. Coauthor with John Duffield (February 1993).

Montana Outfitter Survey: Land Use Fees and Trip Characteristics. Report for the Montana Department of State Lands. Coauthor with John Duffield and Michael Garrity (February 1993).

Economic Analysis of the Values of Surface Uses of State Lands: Summary Report. Report for the Montana Department of State lands. Coauthor with John Duffield and Bruce Anderson (February 1993).

The Reintroduction of Gray Wolves to Yellowstone National Park and Central Idaho: Final Environmental Impact Statement. Report for U.S. Dept. of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. Coauthor of Economic analysis component of EIS. (1994).

Wolves and People in Yellowstone: A Case Study in the New Resource Economics. Report to the Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation. Coauthor with John Duffield and Dave Patterson. (August 1993).

Literature Review and Estimation of Municipal and Agricultural Values of Groundwater Use in the Upper Clark Fork River Drainage. Report to the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences. Coauthor with John Duffield and Anne-Marie Lombardi. (January 1995).

Determining the Economic Value of Whitewater Boating on the Bristol Stretch of the Pemigewasset River. Report to Public Service of New Hampshire. Coauthor of economic valuation analysis sections with John Duffield. (August 1993).

The Tongue River Railroad Extension and the Marketability of Montana Coal. Report for the Northern Plains Resource Council. Coauthor with John Duffield. (January 1994).

U.S. Highway 93 Corridor Use and Opinion Survey. Report for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Coauthor with John Duffield and Jim Boyer. (November 1994).

Bighorn River Angler Survey: Analysis of Responses to Congestion and Contingent Valuation Questions. Report for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Coauthor with John Duffield. (November 1994).

The Reintroduction of the Mexican Wolf Within Its Historic Range in the United States: Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Coauthor with John Duffield of economic analysis component of EIS. (April 1995).

Marketability of Coal from Andalex Resources' Proposed Smoky Hollow Coal Mine. Report for the Grand Canyon Trust. Coauthor with John Duffield and Arnold Silverman. (April 1995).

Claim for Use of Spokane Tribal Lands by Grand Coulee Dam and Reservoir. Report for the Spokane Tribe. Coauthor with John Duffield and Anne-Marie Lombardi. (August 1995).

Claim for Destruction of Spokane Tribal Fisheries by Grand Coulee Dam and Reservoir. Report for the Spokane Tribe. Coauthor with John Duffield and Anne-Marie Lombardi. (August 1995).

Assessment of Damages to Groundwater and Literature Review of Water Use Values in the Upper Clark Fork River Basin. Report for the State of Montana Natural Resource Damage Litigation Program. Coauthor with John Duffield. (October 1995).

Tanana Valley Major Stocked Waters Angler Survey: Use and Valuation Estimates. Report for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fisheries. Coauthor with John Duffield. (March 1996).

The Economic Value of Foregone Cultural Use: A Case Study of the Penobscot Nation. Final report for the Penobscot Nation. Coauthor with John Duffield, David Patterson, Harald Prins, and Keith Eastin. (June 1999)

The Reintroduction of Grizzly Bears to the Bitterroot Mountains: Final Environmental Impact Statement. Coauthor with John Duffield of economic analysis sections. (March 2000).

Draft Integrated Pest Management Plan for Leased Lands at Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges Oregon/California. Report of the Bureau of Reclamation and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Coauthor of economic analysis sections with Jim Boyer and John Duffield. (May 1997)

The Economic Impacts of the 1995-96 shutdown of the National Park System: Macro Study. Report for the National Park Service. Coauthor with John Duffield, Jennifer Carey, Thomas Power, and Richard Walsh. (November 1996)

Economic Assessment of the Highwater 97A Incident: Yosemite National Park. Final report for the National Park Service. Coauthor with John Duffield, Jim Boyer, and Jennifer Carey. (May 1997).

The Economic Impacts of the 1995-96 Shutdown of the National Park System: Micro Study. Report for the National Park Service. Coauthor with Hank Robison and John Duffield. (May 1997).

Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Interagency Bison Management Plan. Coauthor of economic impact analysis with John Duffield, and Jennifer Carey. (August 2000).

Review of the National Park Service Money Generation Model. Final Report for the National Park Service, Washington DC. Coauthor with John Duffield, Thomas Power, and Brian Morgan. (July 1997).

Estimated Economic Impacts of the Going to the Sun Road Closure and Reconstruction. Final Report for the National Park Service, Denver, CO. Coauthor with John Duffield and Brian Morgan. (November 1997).

"Economic Analysis of National Park issues: An Assessment of the Impacts of the 1997 Floods in Yosemite Park". Park Science 20(1):21-23 (Spring 2000). Coauthor with John Duffield.

Socioeconomic Review of the Montana DFWP's Proposed Thompson/Fisher Conservation Easement. Report for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Coauthor with John Duffield. (September 2000)

Winter Use Plans for the Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway: Final Environmental Impact Statement. U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service. Coauthor of economic analysis sections with John Duffield. (October 2000)

Economic Analysis of Critical Habitat Designation for the Zayante Band-Winged Grasshopper. Report for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Economics. Coauthor with John Duffield. (October 2000)

Economic Analysis of Critical Habitat Designation for the Bay Checkerspot Butterfly. Report for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Economics. Coauthor with John Duffield. (January 2001)

Draft Economic Analysis of Critical Habitat Designation for the Kootenai River Population of the White Sturgeon. Report for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Economics. Coauthor with John Duffield. (April 2001)

Analysis of Lease Terms for Painted Rocks Reservoir Water. Prepared for: Trout Unlimited, Montana Water Project. Funding Provided by: Bonneville Power Administration via the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. September 2003. (Co-author)

"St. Mary Diversion and Milk River Project, Preliminary Economic Analysis: Impacts and Benefit-Cost Analysis." Report for Montana DNRC. February 2006. 38 pp. (Co-author)