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**File Code:** 2720  
**Date:** August 11, 2017

Dear Forest User,

The Teton Basin Ranger District of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest is seeking public comments on the proposed Teton Canyon Trailhead, Campground, & Dispersed Recreation Improvements Project. This project is a response to an increase in demand for dispersed camping opportunities, day recreation opportunities, and trailhead congestion while providing for visitor safety, protection of municipal water infrastructure, and preserving watershed and aquatic resources.

The project area is road #009 east of Alta, WY.

**Purpose and Need for Action:**

The 1997 Revised Targhee Forest Plan designated much of lower Teton Canyon as a dispersed camping prescription to maintain a quality dispersed recreation experience for the public and still protect other resource values that occur in the same area. Teton Canyon also facilitates access to two main wilderness trailheads, two non-wilderness trailheads, two campgrounds, and an organizational Boy Scout Camp. On a typical week hundreds to thousands of recreationalists utilize the trailheads, dispersed camping opportunities, and developed campground facilities. In the winter, Teton Canyon has a very popular winter trailhead primarily serving two winter non-motorized trails.

The demand for recreation opportunities has increased to a level where further management is necessary to protect natural resources and minimize conflicts between users.

The purpose of this project is to allow for developed and dispersed recreation in Teton Canyon while ensuring visitor safety and resource protection. This Environmental Analysis will provide the Teton Basin Ranger District implementation options and directions to reconstruct Teton Canyon trailheads, obliterate inappropriate dispersed recreation sites, harden or define properly located high use recreation areas, and direct forest visitors to appropriate developed areas while allowing for the conservation of numerous natural resource qualities that makes this area highly desirable.



### **Proposed Action:**

Maps outlining proposed improvements are provided in Figures 2- 4.

Mill Creek Trailhead (TH): New construction of approximately a .5 acre parking area with plowed snow storage, room for approximately 40 vehicles for front in/back in parking and two trailer parking spots. This parking area will be located on the north side of the road. The appropriate design should include a vault toilet since this trailhead receives year round visitor use. Currently visitors are forced to park in a widened area and along the main road creating safety concerns, ingress and egress concerns, and possible vehicle vs pedestrian conflicts on the roadway.

Teton Canyon Trailheads: Utilize the Forest Service Regional design team to analyze, define, and reconstruct parking areas at the horse transfer site, South Teton TH, and North Teton TH. The goal is to improve the flow of traffic, define parking, and enhance visitor safety.

TetonCanyonDispersedSite2: Obliteration of approximately 330 feet of non-system road through wet and boggy areas with heavy rutting to be replaced by a newly constructed access road in a drier area for a length of approximately 130 feet.

TetonCanyonDispersedSite07 (Reunion Flat Campground): Obliteration of approximately 100 feet of non-system road that either access the site or negatively impacts the stream banks/riparian habitat of Teton Creek. Existing dispersed campsites will be incorporated into the Reunion Flat Campground through a designed expansion to the campground focused on overnight to week long family reunion use similar to what is currently occurring at this site and the Ward Cabin dispersed site lower in the canyon.

TetonCanyonDispersedSite09 & TetonCanyonDispersedSite10 (Ward Cabin Site): The existing access road is a linear feature that does not allow water to leave its surface. It is very rough and continually eroding. This action will analyze both improvement of the drainage to the existing access road and reroute the road and obliterate the existing access.

In addition, obliteration of 970 feet of non-system road negatively impacting stream banks and riparian habitat of Teton Creek while newly constructing 890 feet of improved access road including a loop turn around with camping sites at the end. The focus will be to adjust the road away from Teton Creek. The cut-bank for Teton Creek will receive stabilization (trees, rock barbs or other designed features) to slow the force of the water against the cut slope. Additionally, barrier rock will be installed at the end of the loop to deter future expansion beyond the loop as well as other strategic locations to restrict motorized access from impinging further downstream and upon the streambanks of Teton Creek and nearby riparian areas.

TetonCanyonDispersedSite11: This road provides access to the North Side Canal diversion. Vehicle access is still necessary to access the diversion but the current route does not drain well. Therefore, it is eroding and is hazardous. This alternative proposes the installation of a gate just beyond Dispersed Site 11. The gate would permit authorized vehicle access to the water diversion. There is one dispersed site at the end of this road that would no longer be accessible. Its use appears to be very infrequent due to the extremely degraded condition of the road. Depending on how the closed portion of access road recovers, some areas of active ripping, installation of rolling dips, or reroutes may need to occur.

TetonCanyonDispersedSite13: Two alternatives are being considered for this area;

- Install barrier rock along the City of Alta's diversion canal to restrict motorized access immediately on the canal bank while still allowing motorized camping access to the site.
- Work with the City of Alta to construct a new access road to the diversion along the canal bank. The new access road would be gated to prevent unauthorized access, but still allow access to the dispersed camping site.

#### Trail Improvements:

- The Teton Canyon Parallel Trail was approved in the Teton Canyon Road Improvement EA, but has yet to be constructed. With construction of this trail, the action proposes designating it as a winter travel route for snowmobiles in Teton Canyon. This would remove the snowmobile use from the current groomed Nordic trail and place the backcountry skiers and ice climbers who utilize snowmobiles to access their destination on a separated route reducing user conflicts.
- Groom Sheep Bridge Trail for non-motorized use.

#### **Administrative Review:**

This project, will be analyzed through an Environmental Assessment unless it is determined an Environmental Impact Statement is needed. The Teton Basin Ranger District Ranger will be the deciding officer on this project, and should the proposed action be approved, the District Ranger's decision will be documented in a Finding of No Significance and Decision Notice.

The proposed action is not authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and is subject to predecisional administrative review process (objection process) outlined in 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. In order to be eligible to file an objection, timely specific written comments regarding the proposed action must be submitted during a designated opportunity for public comment. Individual members of organizations must have submitted their own comments to establish individual eligibility to object to the project. Objections received on behalf of an organization are considered as those of the organization only. Names and addresses of those who comment and/or file objections will become part of the public record.

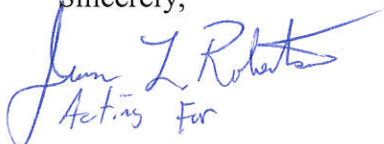
Opportunity to Comment:

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of a legal notice in the Post Register the newspaper of record. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this analysis. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

Written comments must be submitted to: Jay Pence, District Ranger, PO Box 777, Driggs, ID 83422, Fax 208-354-2312. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 to 4:30 Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

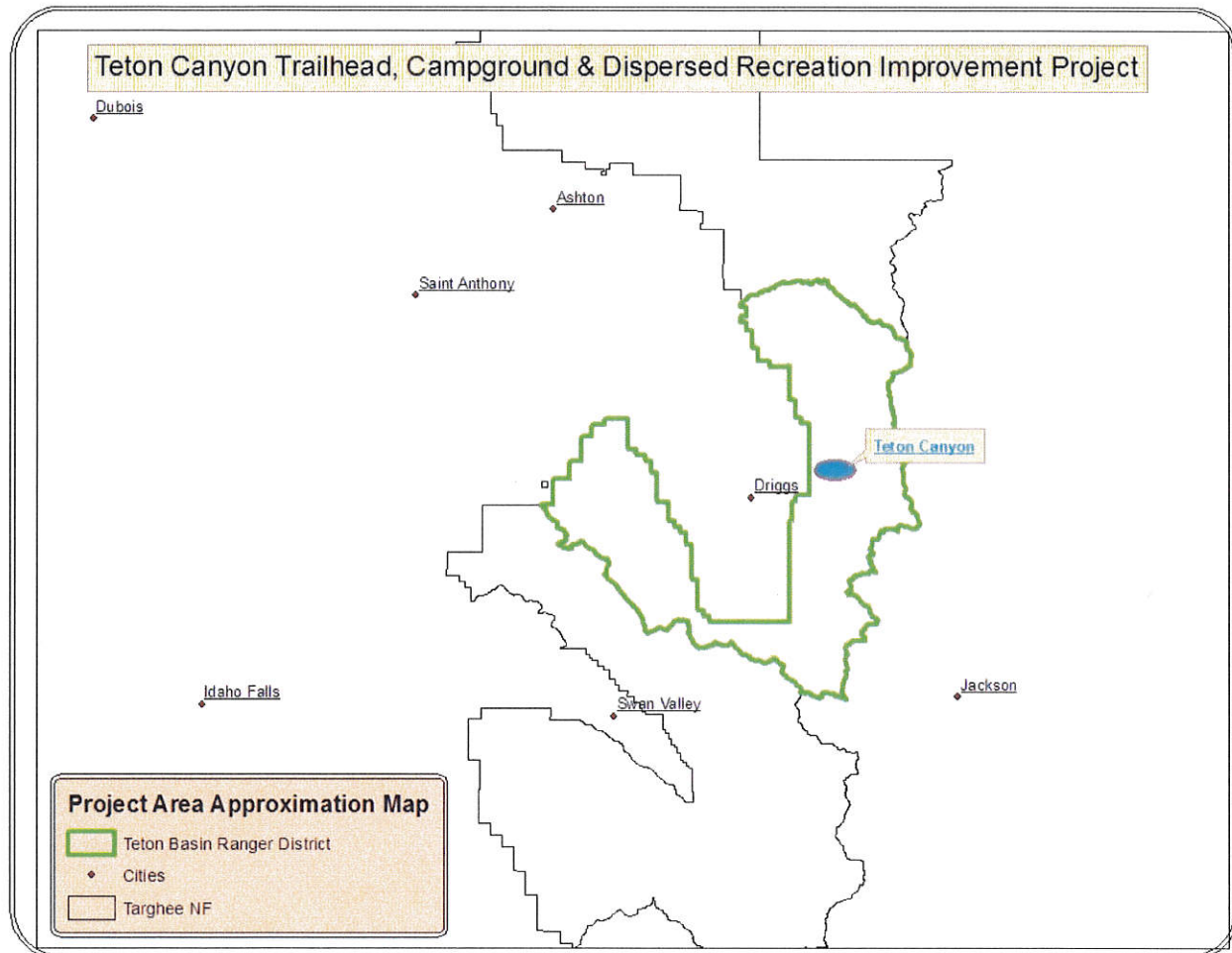
Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to [jmcfarlane@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmcfarlane@fs.fed.us) or [jpence@fs.fed.us](mailto:jpence@fs.fed.us). In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for objection eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay L. Pence", with the words "Acting For" written below it in a smaller, cursive script.

JAY PENCE  
District Ranger

**Figure 1 of 4: Vicinity Map**





Maps show the project area from west to east. The legend indicates whether routes are intended to be left in place, decommissioned, or constructed to mitigate for resource impacts.

**Figure 2 of 4: Proposed Recreation Improvements – West Area**

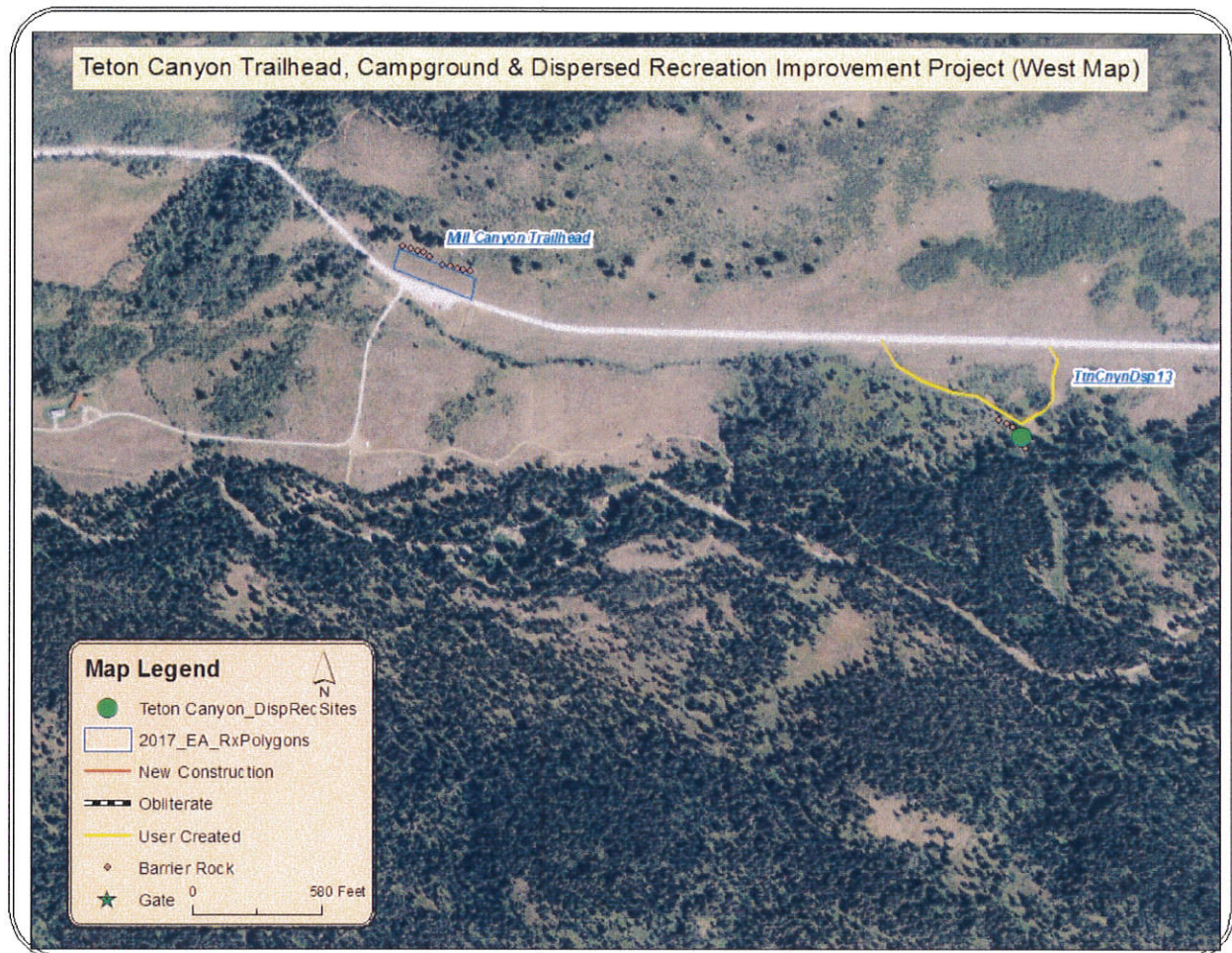




Figure 3 of 4: Proposed Recreation Improvements – Central Area

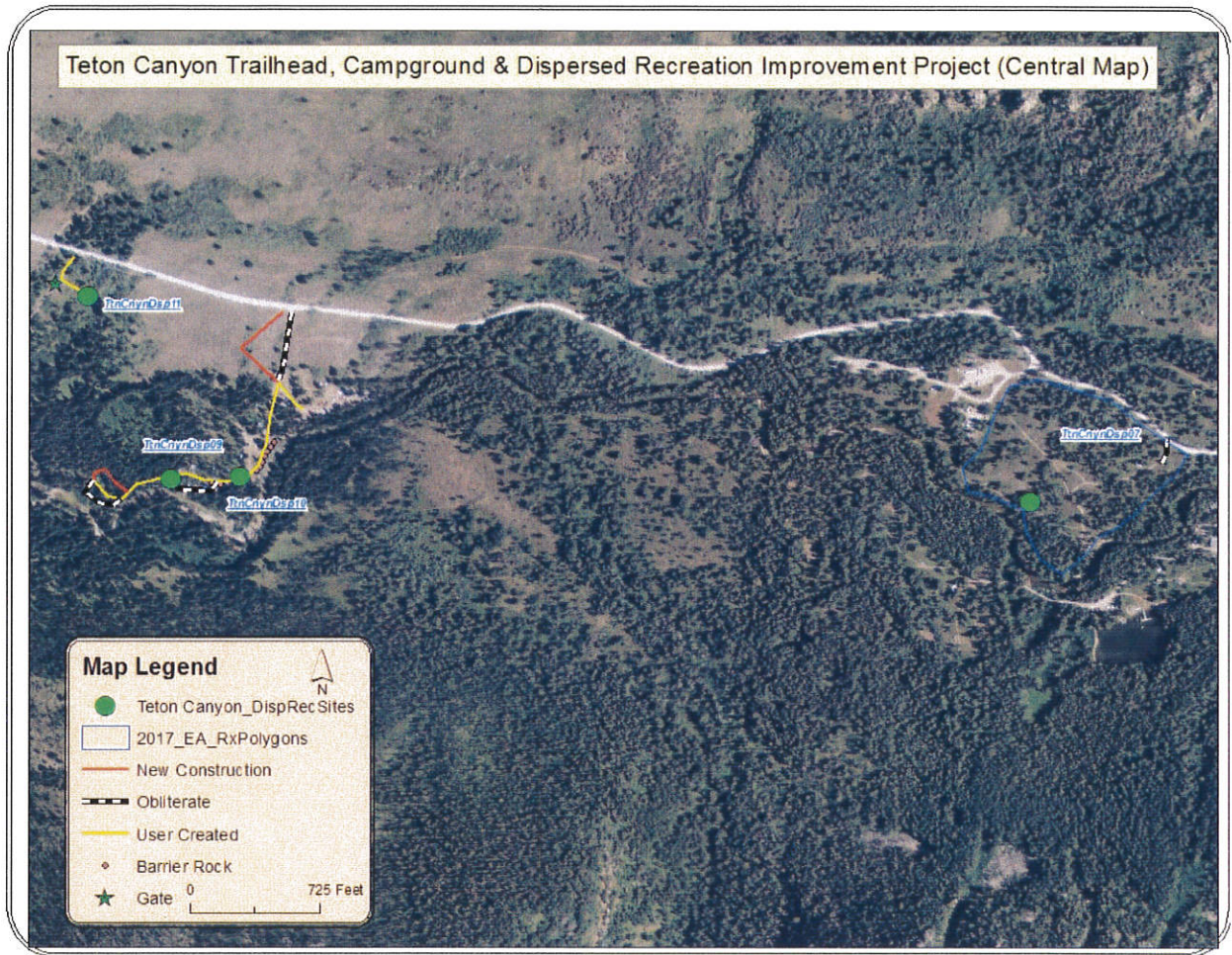




Figure 4 of 4: Proposed Recreation Improvements – East Area

