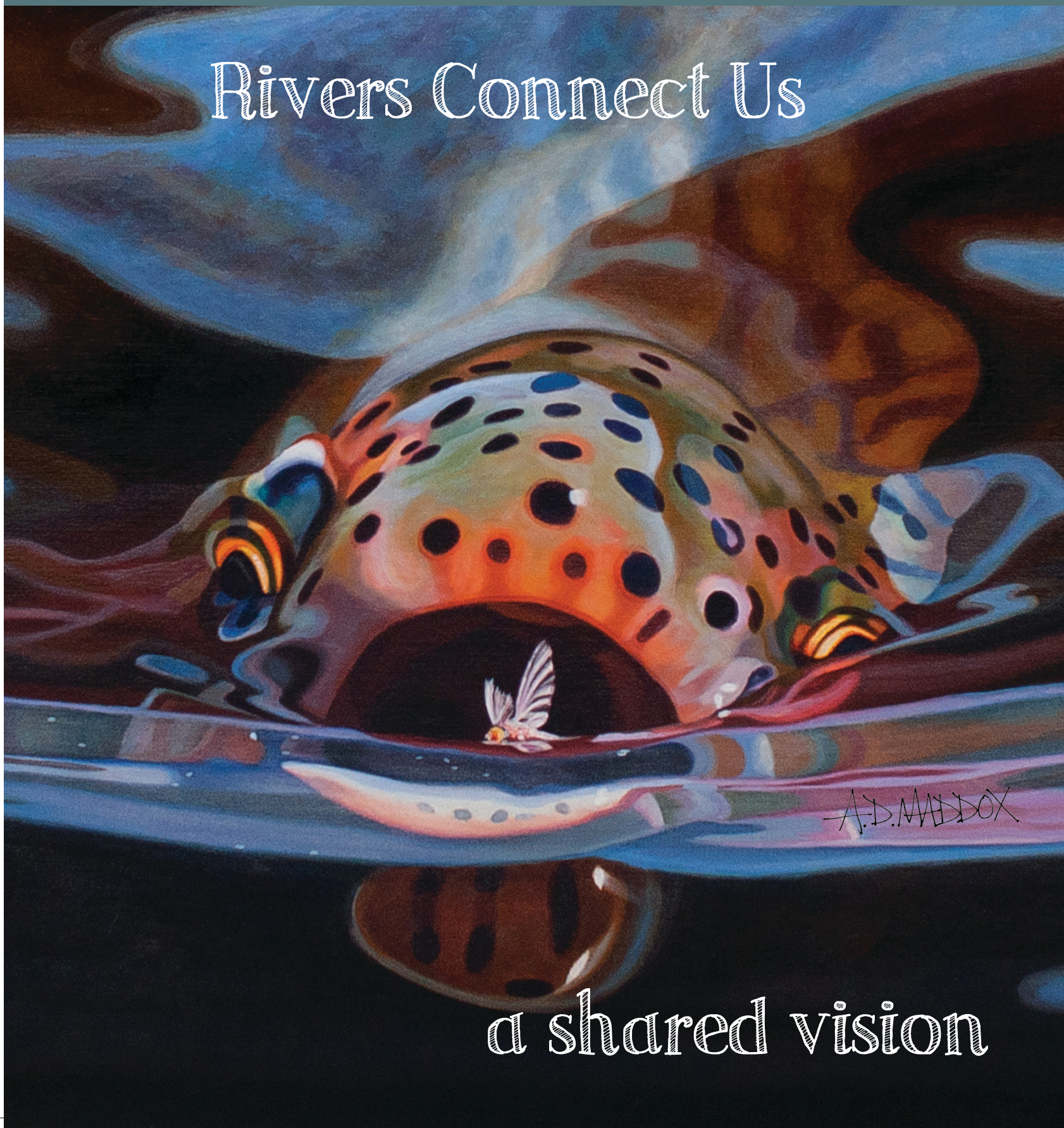




water lines

SUMMER 2016

Rivers Connect Us



a shared vision



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Message from the President

Buzzwords come and go within the conservation movement. Not long ago you couldn't escape terms such as ecosystem services, adaptive management, biodiversity, and a host of others. Some terms become fightin' words and carry a lot of baggage. FTR does its best to avoid those fights and focus instead on plain old stuff that brings diverse interests together to work on a common cause – in our case, conservation, and restoration of the Teton River watershed. It seems that two ordinary words do a good job of explaining these efforts: cooperation and collaboration.

We find ourselves working in tandem with a wide array of people and groups including farmers and ranchers, local governments, federal agencies, fisheries scientists, anglers, and fishing guides. And each cooperative effort often focuses on a specific issue or project where we can find common ground with our partners. It might be working with water users to find ways to meet the needs of farmers, fish, and families; tracking fish population trends and creating prioritized restoration strategies with fisheries scientists and managers; or cooperation with landowners, schools, Teton County, cities, and numerous agencies and organizations to understand and protect water quality.

In our modern turbulent politics, demonizing the “other guy” seems to be the order of the day. FTR is committed instead to finding the sweet spots where we can collaborate with others even if we agree to disagree on other matters. I like to think this approach demonstrates organizational maturity and recognition that being on opposite sides of one issue needn't bar us from working together on others.

My suspicion is that the fish, wildlife, and people along the Teton River tend to benefit from this approach. I also believe that Teton Valley residents, and our supporters, are more pleased too. A little quiet, effective cooperation and collaboration in the service of conserving and restoring our watershed should remind all of us why we cherish the valley as a special place.

With thanks,

Bill Horn
 FTR Board President

A Message from the Executive Director



In their words, “2016 is the 98th year the Klicker Family has been raising kids using strawberries.” Seasonal workers in the fields in Walla Walla.



Executive Director Amy Verbeten doing some spring planting with daughter Greta (21 months).

“Agriculture is a cornerstone of our valley’s local economy, and is also vitally important to the health of our watershed.”

I grew up in Walla Walla, Washington. Though renowned in recent years for its wine industry, Walla Walla has long been known as one of the most productive agricultural regions in the nation, producing everything from sweet onions to wheat, peas, asparagus, and fruits. My family lived and worked in town, but at the age of 12, I was lucky to be hired by the Klicker family to work on their generational strawberry farm. I often tell people that my nine summers of work in the fields, processing plant, farm office, and delivery trucks of the Klicker family farm were as valuable as my entire formal education experience combined. In addition to learning a strong work ethic and lightning-speed berry picking skills, I received an incredible education in leadership, business economics, sustainable agriculture, ecology, and conservation. I also developed a deep-seated belief that, in the Intermountain West, well-managed family farms and conservation can, and should, go hand-in-hand.

I have found this to be especially true here in Teton Valley. Agriculture is a cornerstone of our valley’s local economy, and is also vitally important to the health of our watershed. By diverting water into canals and agricultural land each spring, farmers and ranchers recharge our valley’s underground aquifer. Weeks or months later, this water seeps up into the Teton River and surrounding wetlands, providing a clean, cold source of water for fish and wildlife. This underground “reservoir” also provides a reliable source of clean and abundant water for our valley’s homes and cities. Clean water, flowing streams, and abundant fish and wildlife are, in turn, drivers for business investment and a significant recreation and tourism sector of our economy.

Sadly, across much of the West, well-intended efforts to further improve farming productivity and ecological health have tended to drive people apart, rather than bring them together. It is all too common for communities and relationships between neighbors to be torn apart by misunderstandings and perceived conflicts between the goals of environmentalists and farming/ranching families.

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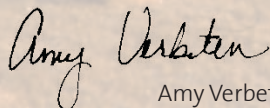
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I am so proud that Friends of the Teton River is part of an amazing and unique group of people and organizations that are actively working to find common ground and develop effective, voluntary strategies for collaborative conservation on private land. For the past year, FTR has been working to assist the Teton Soil Conservation District with a Soil Health Initiative that will protect and improve water quality in the Teton River, while reducing soil erosion and improving ag-

"FTR is deeply committed to a shared vision of watershed conservation that keeps working lands working, while protecting land, water, fish, and wildlife."

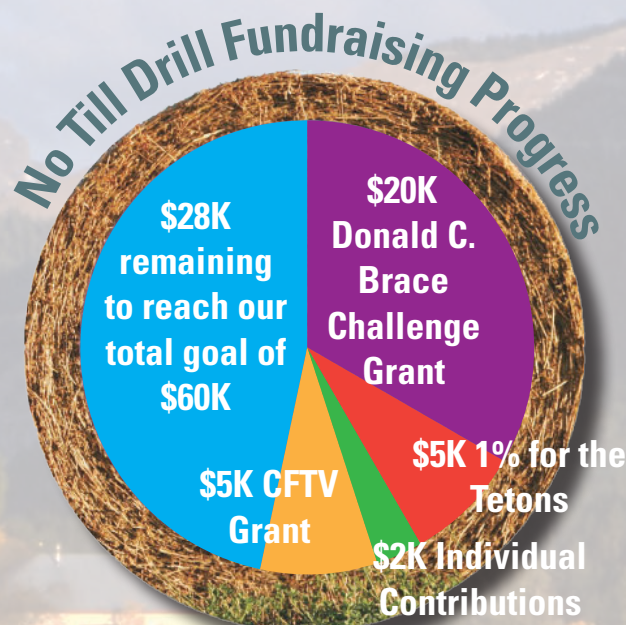
ricultural business practices and returns (see "No-Till Campaign Cultivates Success"). And, even more recently, we have been part of an exciting effort to form a basin-wide Water Users Association. This diverse group, made up of leaders in the farming/ranching industry, land and water conservation groups, and local government leaders, has agreed to a set of shared goals that includes keeping working lands working by securing and maintaining a reliable and affordable supply of water to sustain agriculture; protecting and restoring stream flows and water quality in the Teton River and its tributaries for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and people; and securing and maintaining a safe, affordable, and high quality water supply for municipalities and residential water users. We are now working to identify a set of prioritized strategies to help achieve these goals. The fact that this diverse group has voluntarily come together, at a time when land and water protection in the American West are increasingly contentious, is nothing short of amazing.

FTR is deeply committed to a shared vision of watershed conservation that keeps working lands working, while protecting land, water, fish, and wildlife. Thank YOU for continuing to support this important work!



Amy Verbeten
FTR Executive Director

No-Till Campaign Cultivates Success



Friends of the Teton River and the Teton Soil Conservation District (TSCD) are working together to fundraise for the purchase of a no-till drill, which will be rented to Teton County farmers at very low cost. Use of this farming implement helps to reduce soil erosion, improves water quality, and benefits both agricultural producers and Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout.

FTR and the TSCD are seeking to match a \$20,000 Challenge Grant from the Donald C. Brace Foundation plus \$5,000 from 1% for the Teton and \$5,000 from the Community Foundation of Teton Valley with private donations. We are already more than halfway to our \$60,000 fundraising goal. For more information about this project, please contact FTR's Amy Verbeten (amy@tetonwater.org) or Tina Dean at the TSCD (tetonscd@silverstar.com).

Help support Teton Valley farms and fish!

PHOTO: ERIC SOYLAND

2016 Teton River Creel Survey

by Dan Garren, IDFG Regional Fisheries Biologist



This May through September, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) will be conducting a “creel survey” of anglers on the Teton River. These types of surveys are the best way to obtain data on how many anglers are using the river and how many fish are being caught and/or harvested, as well as gauge angler satisfaction with the fishery. The term creel refers to the wicker basket commonly worn by anglers and used to keep fish for dinner up until the late 1970s. Some of these creels can still be found in the back of local garages or old gear closets, although they are almost never seen on the water these days.

Creel surveys are labor intensive, expensive to implement, and done less frequently than population surveys of fish in the same rivers. The last creel survey conducted on the Teton River was in 2010. Luckily, angler behaviors from year to year are fairly consistent—anglers who practice catch and release tend to do so every year, as opposed to randomly, so angler surveys can be done less frequently than fish surveys. Each survey is designed to provide statistically accurate data, and great care is used to ensure specific protocols are followed so that no bias is introduced into survey results. A schedule of what days will be sampled, what access points will be visited, and start/end

times is drawn up months in advance. These measures are to ensure we get a truly random survey of anglers, which provides more confidence in the data once it is compiled and analyzed.

Creel clerks—one of whom you may recognize as former FTR intern Cirque Gammelin—will be stationed throughout the watershed at access points, and will approach anglers to ask specific questions about their fishing trip. Information on the length of time spent fishing that day, how many fish were caught, the size of fish, and how many were released will be collected. Clerks will also ask questions about other aspects of the fishing day, including angler experience and satisfaction with particular aspects of access and management.

This data can be expanded to estimate total use/catch/harvest for the fishing season and then compared to past years. Trends in angler preferences, harvest practices, and priorities for management can then be determined and used to help shape the future management of the river. The end goal is to create the best experience possible for anglers, while also managing the resource carefully. So, if you see a creel clerk out and about this summer, spend five minutes talking with them—the end result may help us provide a better experience for you in the future!

Fisheries Challenge Reels in Support



Earlier this year, the **John and Mary Short Foundation** made a generous \$20,000 Challenge Grant for FTR's fisheries research program, to honor John's memory (1944-2015) and his passion for fishing, science, and the Teton River. The Fisheries Program has been the longest-running program here at Friends of the Teton River and has had the most visible impact in our watershed, in the form of habitat restoration projects, fish ladders, and stream channel improvements. But the behind-the-scenes story is that all of these projects rely heavily on conducting quality research before the on-the-ground work begins. It's because this is so important to the rest of our work that we're asking for your support to match this Fisheries Funding Challenge dollar-for-dollar. We are approaching the tail end of this campaign, and you can help get us there! Make a donation online at www.tetonwater.org or via a donation envelope (found in the recent FY 2015 Annual Report).

Seeing Green: FTR Funds Local Drinking Water Protection

By Shannon Brady

Are you part of a local school or nonprofit in Teton Valley? Do you have an innovative approach to educating our community about drinking water protection? Friends of the Teton River is requesting proposals as part of the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Education sub-grants program. This program is part of a larger EPA Environmental Education grant, the Teton County Water-Wise Initiative, which is designed to increase environmental literacy by encouraging citizens of all ages to participate in hands-on learning, community events, and stewardship activities. The goal of this program is to increase the awareness of potential health risks from environmental contaminants in drinking water sources and resources available in the community that will help individuals protect and improve their drinking water sources. We are excited to announce that the first recipients to receive funding from the sub-grants program are two local teachers in Teton County School District #401!



Sixth grade students identify aquatic macroinvertebrates as indicators of water quality during Water Awareness Week last spring.

Spring 2016 Grant Recipients

Our first grantee, **Brad Street**, is a sixth grade science teacher at Teton Middle School. Mr. Street is working to implement a sixth grade Water Awareness field trip with content focused on clean drinking water protection. He will draw on FTR's Teton Watershed Curriculum and local water resource professionals to develop a curriculum for the field trip that addresses Idaho Content Standards. These field trips will take place during May 2016 and May 2017, and will coincide with the statewide Idaho Water Education Foundation's Water Awareness Week. Students will learn about topics such as proper waste disposal, soil health, macroinvertebrates, and the function of groundwater aquifers, as well as how all of these relate to drinking water quality.

Dan Romano, a science teacher at Teton High School, will be collaborating with FTR's education coordinator to develop a drinking water quality testing program for his high school chemistry class. The program will occur during

the next academic year and will involve trips to local field sites to compare water quality parameters such as nitrogen, phosphorous, turbidity, and pH. The chemistry class will then apply their new scientific skillset to run a free nitrate-testing event for private well owners in Teton County, Idaho, in spring 2017. This event will be a part of FTR's WaterWise Community Education Series, and will provide information about how and when to test private well water, and where to go and who to contact if you suspect a problem with your well water quality.

FTR is accepting applications now, on a rolling basis, for this sub-grants program. Funds may be used for travel to participate in field trips; curriculum materials, printing, and educational supplies; teacher training, professional development, curriculum development, and program evaluation; hiring a substitute teacher so that a teacher can lead field trips or attend professional development; educational material translation services; and more. Contact FTR Education Program Coordinator Shannon Brady at shannon@tetonwater.org, for questions and to request a grant application today!

In case you missed our WaterWise series:

January: "You Dump It, You Drink It" Nearly 75 people showed up for a special trivia night at the Tatanka Tavern in Driggs to learn about proper disposal of household hazardous waste.

February: "Healthy Soils, Healthy Watersheds" Month—check the FTR website/blog about how soil health and drinking water are connected.


March: "Water Law 101: Get to Know Your Water Rights" at the West Side Yard in Victor.

April: "Free Nitrate Testing for Private Well Owners" Nearly 75 folks showed up for our free drinking water quality testing event in the Driggs City Center. If you were unable to make it and want to test your water for nitrates, stop by the FTR office for a free nitrate testing strip.

CHANGES TO FTR EVENTS

If it can be said that rivers connect us, then it can also be said that headwaters are the source of our connection. We are taking it back to the source for this year's summer celebrations, as we change up the locations for both the Fisherman's Dinner and the River Party.

2016 FISHERMAN'S DINNER



friday, june 17th
5:30 pm until 9 pm

featuring
A PRE-EVENT CHAIRLIFT RIDE &
"TOP OF THE WATERSHED" TOAST
SILENT & LIVE AUCTION
AWARDS CEREMONY

new this year
TARGHEE LODGING SPECIALS
& ON-SITE CHILD CARE
AVAILABLE!*

*ASK FOR DETAILS & BOOK IN ADVANCE

GRAND TARGHEE RESORT
ASPEN MEADOWS PAVILION
ALTA, WY

PURCHASE TICKETS IN ADVANCE
\$150/COUPLE - GROUP DISCOUNTS
CONTACT info@tetonwater.org
208-354-3871

*celebrating fifteen years
of teton river conservation*

16th Annual River Party



August 21
3pm-dusk
Reunion Flat Campground
Teton Canyon, WY

FEATURING
Knotty Pine BBQ
Silent Auction & Raffle
Campfire & sing-a-longs
Family Fun

Assorted
beer, wine & soft drinks
for purchase

NEW THIS YEAR
The ticket price will only be \$5/person
To keep the event low-cost, we're asking party-goers to sign up
for a potluck dish to share (appetizer, side dish, salad, or dessert)
using the Volunteer Spot website or info@tetonwater.org

Bring your camp chair!
Carpooling encouraged.
Please leave pets at home.

New Volunteer Sign-up is Spot-On

Volunteer Spot is a quick and easy online scheduling tool that connects volunteers with opportunities to help. Friends of the Teton River is excited to announce that we will be rolling out an FTR sign-up page on Volunteer Spot just in time for our annual Fisherman's Dinner and River Party events!

With Volunteer Spot, you can visit FTR's new page, view upcoming volunteer opportunities (and get important details like date, time, and job description), select whatever options most appeal to you, and confirm your spots! Vol-

unteer Spot will let us know that you have registered to volunteer, and we will follow up with a confirmation email of our own.

We are so grateful to all of our friends who volunteer their time; this will be a great way for us to make the process quicker and easier. Browse upcoming volunteer opportunities using the Volunteer Spot link on our homepage, www.tetonwater.org, or look for announcements on Facebook or our upcoming e-newsletters.

CONTACT US:

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A Shared Vision: Partner Perspectives



Joselin Matkins, Executive Director, Teton Regional Land Trust

"For more than 25 years, TRLT has worked hard to protect important wetland and riparian areas in the Teton Basin. While we have worked in close partnership with FTR for years, there is a great deal more we could do to ensure that water resources and the associated habitats and agricultural lands that depend on them are secure for future generations. Continued partnership between TRLT, landowners, and FTR will strengthen our ability to protect working lands in the Teton Watershed and to work with agricultural producers and other stakeholders to ensure continued economic success of farms while maintaining our valley's ecological health."



Stephen Bagley, President, Teton County Farm Bureau

"Farmers and Ranchers in this valley have a long history of implementing practices that not only feed our country and our families, but also protect healthy soil, water, and land. However, increasing demands for water, rising land prices, and development pressure as cities grow makes our work more challenging as each year passes. Rather than bowing to these pressures, we are bringing together leaders in the farming and irrigation community with leaders of local conservation groups, including Friends of the Teton River and the Teton Regional Land Trust, as well as city and county leaders, to actively generate shared solutions."

PHOTO: JENNY VANWINKLE

Share in the Tin Cup Spirit



The **Tin Cup Challenge** is Teton Valley's biggest nonprofit fundraising event, culminating with a community fun-run and celebration on Saturday, July 16, at the Driggs City Center. Friends of the Teton River counts on the Tin Cup donations from over 200 individuals and families to account for nearly half of our unrestricted giving each year. With your gifts through the Tin Cup, FTR expects that we'll hit the \$675,000 mark in cumulative Tin Cup giving (since 2008), and we'll exceed \$1 million in total giving to-date through Old Bill's (2001-2007) and Tin Cup combined!

Donations made to Friends of the Teton River through the Community Foundation of Teton Valley's Tin Cup Challenge are matched by Community Challengers. Donations are accepted NOW through 5 pm on July 22 via www.cftetonvalley.org or by filling out a Tin Cup donation form, found in your mailbox or around town.