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PHOTO: JOE RIPPLE

Perspectives on Water By Adonia Ripple

It's my connection.

Trail Creek flows through my back-yard. In the winter, I often trudge through the snow to see what a cold day has done to its icy shores. After a rain, I stand on the porch and listen to hear the change in pitch as the water moves over the cobbles, picturing the surge in volume moving toward the Teton River. In the heat of summer, I sit on its banks under the shade of willows and soak my feet in the coolness only a flowing body of water can provide. I mark time by the seasons of Trail Creek.

I have not known Trail Creek for very long. My husband and I moved over to Teton Valley just three years ago, but this little creek has been witness to some of my most significant moments. I stood on its bank when I learned I was having a child. Nine months later, I brought that very kid home from the hospital and directly to our stretch of the creek, to dip his miniature feet into the mountain waters that sculpt his new home. I go to that shore to make sense of things, or just to watch a growing boy throw rocks into the riffles. If I am awake at night, fretting over some earthly woe, it is the low roar of Trail Creek coming through my window that puts me back to sleep. Plainly said, Trail Creek is a meaningful part of my life and helps me to know my place in the world.

With this new role as Executive Director of Friends of the Teton River, I feel even closer to the creek, as I may now link my professional purpose to it. I see it as my report card as FTR's Executive Director; as a place where I can find solace; and as a rhythmic measure of earthly time. Water keeps me connected.

As Trail Creek leaves my backyard, other people downstream apply their own meaning and purpose to this water. For some it is their income, as it grows the crops they depend on for a living. For others it is an amenity that increases the value of their home. It represents fun and recreation and also can be a source of conflict and dispute. Fish eyes see it as a place to reproduce and for their fry to grow up. The water gets moved through irrigation pipes, splashed in by enthusiastic dogs, and pushed by boaters' paddles. No matter what lens it is seen through or how it is handled, this water holds high value in peoples' lives.

FTR's job is to understand and work with the community for the betterment of this watershed. Especially in the West, water has become political, disputed, and scarce. Rather than let our differing views on this precious resource conflict, I believe FTR can embrace these perspectives and use them to create shared ideals and projects that reflect our community water values.

It's your river, and it is our mission.



PHOTO: ERIC SOYLAND

It's my crop.

When you shake John Winger's hand, you start to get the story. It's a tale of pipe to move, barley to grow, weeds to manage. Hands that in their youth moved irrigation dams all day long; strong, well-callused hands that in themselves tell the history of irrigation in Teton Valley. When John was twelve, his father saw the opportunity to buy land south of Victor and develop his cattle business. His family purchased property in the Warm Creek draw; a valuable spot because the water is spring-fed and therefore does not freeze in the winter. This is of great benefit to livestock, and to the rancher who would otherwise be chopping through ice to keep his animals watered in the cold months.

Today, John works this same family ground. The cattle are gone, but he still grows barley and hay. He holds the weighty post of president of the Trail Creek Sprinkler Irrigation Company, and is responsible for all the shareholders in his part of the world getting the water they need on time.

It is no secret how tough it is to grow things in Teton Valley. Vexed by both a short growing season and relatively junior water rights, farmers take a gamble every spring in these parts. John's eyes reflect the high stakes; he wears the noble complexion of a man who relies on the land for his livelihood, and carries the added responsibility of overseeing the water use in his irrigation district at the south end of the Valley.

Rather than rely on flood irrigation, which is both unreliable and inefficient, the folks along Trail Creek



pooled their water rights and formed the Trail Creek Sprinkler Irrigation Company. In the 1960s and '70s, the system was built by constructing a gravity-fed pipeline to make delivery of water more reliable and reduce the loss of water that occurs in open canals.

John recalls that first summer with the new system: "I had bought a hay stacker and with the increased production, I was able to pay off my share that first season!" Gone were the days of moving irrigation dams all day long; now, water could be delivered to Trail Creek growers with precision and efficiency, greatly boosting their crop production.

4 Perspectives on Water

John Winger, continued from page 3

Moving irrigation pipe is a time-consuming activity but this farmer still delights in the task. "I look forward to moving pipe. It's my quiet time, when I can make plans. It is my peaceful time to be alone," John says.

Users on the Trail Creek system have to share and share alike, requiring tremendous coordination and cooperation. As the president of the irrigation company, John is at the center of this coordination. Because it is more efficient and precise than a simple canal delivery system, the pipeline has allowed John to make adjustments to the way the company uses it's water, which has increased the amount of water that remains in stream for fish and other wildlife.

John uses some of his water to grow malt barley for Grupo Modelo beers (Corona, Pacifico, Modelo). His Teton Valley barley is shipped all the way to Mexico City for

"It is a given how important water is."

fermentation. Once the barley kernel achieves a doughlike consistency, the water gets turned off and the heads are allowed to ripen. As he describes this stage, John rolls his fingers mimicking how he checks the heads of his barley. Water on and water off, at just the right time, is the key to successful growing.

"It is a given how important water is," he says with a twinkle in his blue eyes, reflecting on the deal he has going with Mother Nature. When asked if he ever just goes down to Warm Creek to throw the stick for his dog, Moses, he replies with a chuckle, "You must have a lot of time on your hands!"

It's my teacher.

Reed Hutton is a fine example of what a river can do for the heart of a young man. This confident, well-spoken, and sincere kid picked up a kayak paddle at age nine, and has never looked back. Reed was enrolled in the Jackson Hole Kayak Club initially so he could learn about whitewater safety. Kayaking has since blossomed into a serious passion for this fourteen-year- old. Reed won a kayaking competition in Green River and came in third in a Casper event (his little brother Ryan, age twelve, placed second). The enthusiasm is evident in his bright brown eyes that reflect what boating really means to him.

When he was just ten years old, Reed ran the whitewater section of the Snake River canyon between Hoback and Alpine. "I was scared out of my mind! But now I am surfing and doing tricks on those waves," he says.

Reed carries the kind of confidence that can only come from having put yourself in situations of real consequence, and come out ahead. He recounted the first time he mastered his "combat roll"—the boating term





for righting your kayak after you have been flipped over by the river itself: "After that, I realized I could do anything. I no longer saw obstacles in the river as something to avoid. Instead, I saw them as places I wanted to be and had the skill to be in." Reed appreciates the selfreliance of boating, and likes the fact that if something goes wrong on the river, he has only himself to blame.

Reed's connection to the Teton River is from an angler's perspective; fishing the seams with a dry fly and landing beautiful cuttys in the family drift boat. This past summer, Reed and his family traversed the Tetons on a backpacking trip, and he visited the glaciers that feed his beloved rivers.

"I can relate myself to rivers and have always loved them," he says with a smile. This love began in his (even) younger years, spent on rope swings over the Fish River in Alabama, to now paddling the mighty rivers that run through his Eastern Idaho home.

When asked about what all that kayaking really teaches him about life, he is quick with his response. "Just like in boating, in life there are lots of variables and obstacles you have to get around. Kayaking teaches me how to navigate the flowing river of life. It teaches me to go for the challenges I want."

PHOTOS: DEREK HUTTON

It's my livelihood.

Chris Jensen's appreciation and understanding for the waters in Teton Valley has spanned many eras of his life, starting in his early years guiding in the area in 1998 with Hyde Outfitters (now WorldCast). He currently brings his affable disposition and years of experience to his veteran-guide position with the Lodge at Palisades Creek, where he guides on the South Fork of the Snake. Chris also works for ProGuide Direct, an online gear store based in Victor that gives guides a commission on purchases they refer. He comes at river-related work from a few different angles.

"Because you make your living from it, anything that happens to the river you take personally."

When you get Chris talking fish, his passion is evident. "When people ask about fishing the Teton River, I always have to clarify which section they are talking about. The upper section is about a slow float, long leaders, and late evening hatches; the lower section through the canyon is fast and furious and quick casting with hoppers," he says. Whether he is patiently teaching his three-year-old son Grady how to cast as the alpenglow hits the Tetons in the valley, or braving the wildness, rattlesnakes, and remoteness of the canyon section, Chris holds an appreciation for all aspects of his home river.

Chris recalls countless trips with clients through the canyon section of the Teton River, and the sense of adventure it invokes. "You park in this hayfield, and walk to the edge of the canyon and point out where you are going. Clients can't really believe they are going to go down there, and that the boat has to be slid down." When thinking about the upper section, out comes a story of how the Jensen family spends many a summer's evening: A float from Rainey to Packsaddle, and Jenny (Chris' wife) running the shuttle on her bike while Chris



PHOTO: CHRIS JENSEN

waits at the boat ramp with Grady, throwing rocks and trying to con the tot into a bit more fishing.

When asked about his perspective on water itself, it is hard for Chris to separate water from fish. "Because you make your living from it, anything that happens to the river you take personally. You feel emotionally connected to the fish's well-being." Chris enjoys returning to familiar holes again and again, and it reminds him of visiting old friends.

Thinking about his life, and why he lives and works where he does, Chris notes the unique access Teton Valley residents have to the river. "I don't know if everyone realizes how good our access is here. You can put in one mile from town, not really see anyone, have a great two-hour float, and be home for dinner."



It's in my blood.

Maybe it was paddling about in her water bowl as a pup or having a human mom who spends a lot of her time fishing great rivers. More likely it was the long line of Labrador genes that make water loving inherent to Maggie Keeley. If you frequent Fox Creek East, you have surely seen her chocolate-brown form jumping into the water to retrieve a stick. While Maggie is an enthusiastic water lover, she is an obedient fishing dog and knows not to jump out of the boat for a swim unless told. Of course her most hard-wired skills show up when a shot goes off and a duck falls out of the sky into a freezing cold body of water.

"Maggie goes in that water to retrieve with reckless and gleeful abandon," says her owner, Kim Keeley, FTR Board President and co-owner of the Victor Emporium.

Maggie is lucky to get to spend so much time in wet places, doing just what she knows best. For all that boldness and enthusiasm, Maggie likes to unwind with a little birdwatching and a tasty bowl of huckleberry ice cream.

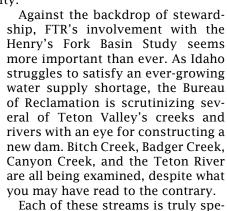
The Henry's Fork Basin Study

By Sarah Rupp, FTR Streamflow Restoration Director

As I contemplate the work I do at Friends of the Teton River, I am reminded of John Steinbeck's novel, *To a God Unknown*:

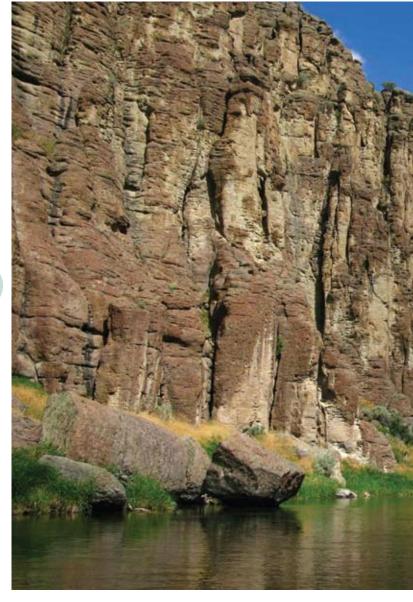
The river with its mask of trees cut a twisting path down through the valley. Two miles away he could see, beside a gigantic lonely oak, the white speck of his tent pitched and left while he went to record his homestead. A long time he sat there. As he looked into the valley, Joseph felt his body flushing with a hot fluid of love. "This is mine," he said simply, and his eyes sparkled with tears and his brain was filled with wonder that this should be his. There was pity in him for the grass and the flowers; he felt that the trees were his children and the land his child. For a moment he seemed to float high in the air and to look down upon it. "It's mine," he said again, "and I must take care of it."

These words describe beautifully the connection people have to land and water, and the obligation associated with that connection—stewardship. The concept of stewardship drives everything we do at FTR. Through stewardship, one can appreciate the need to preserve biological diversity, soil and water quality, scenic beauty, and the corridors that link landscapes. Through stewardship, one can understand the importance of preserving agricultural lands for economic, social, and ecological benefits, and the importance of helping families retain their lands. Through stewardship, one can realize the need for landscape-based education, collaborative partnerships, and funding, and the need to conduct all actions with integrity.



Each of these streams is truly special, almost otherworldly. The water has cut large crevasses into the earth. Statuesque rhyolite spires rise from canyon floors, striving to meet the sky. Whitewater rushes past large boulders. Grass glistens on the banks, and the smell of sage

The rhyolitic towers along Badger Creek are watchful "guardians" of the stream. PHOTO BY ERIC SOYLAND



The walls of Teton Canyon rise high above the river. PHOTO BY SCOTT BOSSE, AMERICAN RIVERS.

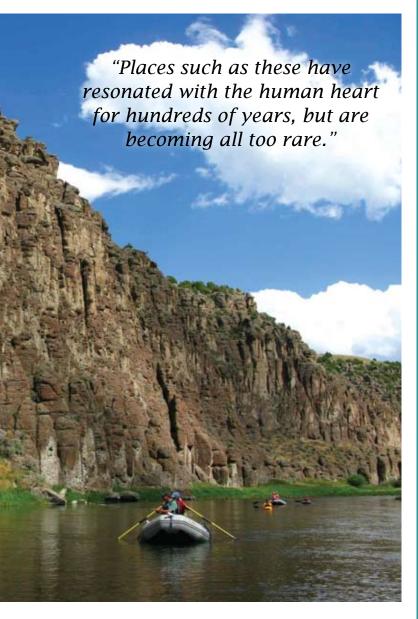
fills the air. Eagles and osprey fly overhead, deer graze quietly in juniper shadows, and beaver and otters swim in shallow pools.

This summer, I stood on the rim of Badger Creek canyon with staff members of the Bureau of Reclamation to examine the potential dam location. Eric Soyland generously opened his property, providing FTR the opportunity to bring the Bureau onto the ground, in hopes of connecting conceptual ideas with actual places.

This was the first time Bureau planning staff had moved outside of a hotel conference room in Rexburg, and put their eyes on Teton Valley's pristine canyons. It was the first time that many could truly understand the magnitude of what is being contemplated. And the visit couldn't have come at a better time, just as the Bureau's technical team began to analyze specific dam sites and other water supply alternatives.



Hits Home

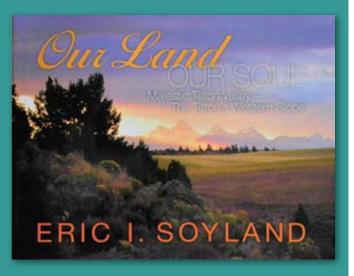


As I stood looking down into Badger Creek, I was overwhelmed by both the beauty of the landscape and the sense of obligation to take care of it. I felt the ideals of stewardship rise within me. Backing away, I couldn't help but harbor the hope that I would be able to share the beauty of this place with a younger generation in years to come.

My experience was mirrored by most of the people standing with me that day. These canyons have the ability to touch everyone. Places such as these have resonated with the human heart for hundreds of years, but are becoming all too rare.

The Bureau plans to present preliminary information on the construction of dams on Bitch Creek, Badger Creek, Canyon Creek, and the Teton River, as well as other water supply strategies, on January 10, 2012, at the Henry's Fork Watershed Council meeting. The meeting will be held at the SpringHill Marriott in Rexburg, starting at 8:30 a.m. The public is encouraged to attend. If you'd like more information, please contact me at (208) 354-3871 or at sarah@tetonwater.org.

Book Review



Local author and conservationist Eric Soyland started working on a tribute to the open spaces of Teton Valley fifteen years ago; he released his completed book—*Our Land, Our Soul*—late this summer. The book features more than a hundred color photographs and prose written from the point of view of a wagonmaster seeing Teton Valley for the first time.

"For me, these are the most majestic places on earth, and it would be a travesty to lose them."

Soyland's work honors the valley's agricultural heritage, and with it, stewardship for our wildlife and natural resources. As his early settler says, "Good stewards and guardians we strive to become, for both this pristine land and its animal inhabitants, for they gave us their hearts, their souls, their land."

In the book, Soyland sought to capture his passion for the natural beauty of this place. "Teton Valley is truly magical," he says. A globe-trotting pilot and sailor, Soyland cites Teton Valley as one of the world's great ecosystems, a national treasure, and one that he'd like to see preserved for generations to come. "I want people to enjoy my photographs, but I also want them to pay attention to their relationship with this landscape we live in, so it's here for eternity."

Soyland particularly wanted to share images of the Teton River Canyon and tributaries Bitch Creek and Badger Creek (where he lives), all of which are currently considered potential sites for dams in the Henry's Fork Basin Study. The book is dedicated to these canyons and, in part, to Friends of the Teton River and other NGOs doing conservation work in Teton Valley. "For me, these are the most majestic places on Earth, and it would be a travesty to lose them."

Our Land, Our Soul is available at local stores including Dark Horse Books, Broulim's, and the Victor Emporium, and from Amazon. A sneak peek at the book's contents can also be found at www.ericisoyland.wordpress.com



This summer, Friends of the Teton River added to our "toolbox" of innovative fisheries research equipment, and continued to gather important information about fish movement, population, and abundance in the Teton Watershed. Thanks to the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, Dr. John Short, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), Wyoming Game and Fish, the Teton Springs Foundation, and the CHC Foundation for supporting this important work.

Screw Trap

A **screw trap** is a large, rotating metal cone on a floating platform, used to capture tiny juvenile trout as they out-migrate to the Teton River after hatching in tributaries. Screw-like tunnels within the cone funnel fish into a live trap, where they remain, unharmed, until they are counted and released by a fisheries technician.

Fisheries Technician

Rotating

Trout Drum

collected
here

then counted
and released
downstream

enter here

A fisheries technician is a college student or recent graduate whose passion for fisheries science makes him or her willing to work long hours in exchange for low wages and the occasional treat of "hook and line" surveys, otherwise known as "getting paid to go fly fishing"!

This summer, fisheries technicians Ben Davis and James Fraser set up, maintained, and repaired our new screw trap; installed solar panels on FTR's six interrogation sites; assisted IDFG with a Teton River electro-fishing survey; installed more than 1,000 PIT tags; and analyzed lots of data.

What have we learned?

Fry have been known to migrate on the new moon, for the theorized reason of being under the cover of darkness, thus less vulnerable to predation. Sure enough, the new moon was on August 29th, and we saw peak outmigration from Teton Creek to the main stem on August 30th. Understanding this detail of juvenile Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT) migration timing will help us know exactly when flows are needed to ensure this crucial stage in a cutty's lifecycle can be completed.

PIT Tag (Passive Integrated Transponder)

A **Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag** is a small glass capsule, about the size of a tic tac mint, installed in the abdomen of fish caught in electro-fishing and hook and line surveys. Stationary PIT tag readers, called interrogation sites, allow FTR to track the movement of trout throughout the watershed, without having to recapture them. More than two thousand trout in the Teton Watershed now have PIT tags.

What have we learned?

This was the first year we could monitor spring spawning, and we found that tagged fish moved up tributaries between June 8 and July 8. We detected many YCT moving up Teton Creek to spawn, and several on Fox Creek, but very few on Trail Creek. Information gathered from interrogation sites will be important for helping FTR and our agency partners determine the highest priority streams for habitat and stream flow restoration.

State Grant Helps Protect Valley's Drinking Water

Thanks to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, FTR will now be able to better protect drinking water quality. FTR has been awarded \$28,070 over the next three years to create a Drinking Water Source Protection Plan for Teton County. This project recognizes that our community's economic vitality relies upon a sustainable supply of clean and reliable drinking water. Preventing contamination of drinking water supplies will minimize costly future problems, such as expanded drinking water monitoring requirements, additional water treatment requirements, or expensive environmental cleanup activities. FTR will work with stakeholders to develop drinking water source protection areas, community and business stewardship programs, water conservation standards, best management practices, educational workshops, and strategies to promote collaboration among utility companies, irrigation companies, water quality agencies, municipalities, and county entities.



Education Director Amy Verbeten tests surface water quality on Warm Creek. PHOTO: AMY WRIGHT

A Salute to John Siverd's Board Service By Anna Lindstedt

We all know the feeling of waiting in anticipation for a certain day to come—perhaps with excitement for a long-awaited visitor, or with reservation for a big life change or a sad goodbye. I knew this day was coming, but I don't know if I believed it would ever really get here. In September, John Siverd handed over the reins after serving seven and a half years on the FTR Board of Directors, with the past three of those years as President.



I have been at Friends of the Teton River almost as long as John has. From the get-go, I could tell that this former Wall Street guy (who often dons a cowboy hat and boots) had a real passion for water (or rather trout) in Teton Valley. Over the years, the trout in John's fish stories have become ever bigger and more plentiful. While some of this success can be attributed to John's growing skill as a fisherman, some of it is certainly due to FTR's work improving our river and streams. John has planted his share of willows and volunteered at countless events, but it is his leadership, both behind the scenes and in the public eye, that has most contributed to our watershed and our community.

John has nurtured FTR as we have grown from a fledgling nonprofit to a nationally recognized watershed group. Like a father figure, he has checked in regularly, encouraged our ideas, offered advice (solicited and unsolicited), and used a strong hand when tough decisions were needed. He took an interest in all aspects of our work, from finances to fish surveys, and from policies to parties.

Most importantly, he brought people together around a common cause he wholeheartedly believes in.

The day has finally come for us to thank you, John Siverd, for your leadership and service. We promise to carry on with the same integrity and passion you brought when you walked through our door.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Join FTR this season for one or more of our public presentations and events, designed to educate Teton Valley adults about water resource issues that affect our community. Visit www.tetonwater.org for more information, including specific dates, times, and locations.

JANUARY

What Does the Future Hold for Teton Canyon and the Henry's Fork Watershed?

Will a new dam be built on the Teton River, Bitch Creek, or another site in the Teton Watershed? Learn the latest on the Henry's Fork Special Study, which is investigating options for increasing water storage in Teton Canyon and the Henry's Fork Basin.

FEBRUARY 18, 2012

Wine for Water: Wine Tasting and Art Event

Celebrate the beauty of water in the Teton Watershed and surrounding regions during a wine tasting and art event sponsored by Friends of the Teton River.

March

The Future Sustainability of Water Resources in Teton Valley

Learn how farmers, fish, and communities can benefit from voluntary, market-based stream flow transactions. This presentation is a part of the VARD Sustainability Series.

APRIL

It's Your Water: Is it Safe?

In Teton Valley, we take clean water for granted. But is the water in your tap really safe for you and your family to drink? Participate in a free water quality testing day, and learn what is being done to protect clean water in Teton County.

May

Teton Watershed Film Festival

Join Friends of the Teton River as we celebrate the role of water in our valley, our region, and our world through a vareity of short films and cinematic media.



... let FTR keep you in woolies and

This holiday season,
FTR and ProGuide Direct have teamed up
with Ibex and Mountain Khakis
to offer you a *sweet deal** that benefits *your* River and streams.

*offer lasts November 30 through December 16

FTR will receive 15% of your purchase price you get a great deal on top-name brands, and your holiday shopping will support the watershed you love!

Learn more at: proguidedirect.promotions/fottr-promo/

Contribute a part of your next

This holiday season, we're launching a new way for you to contribute to Friends of the Teton River, while you do your on-line gift shopping. FTR has partnered with ProGuide Direct, a new on-line outdoor store (based in Victor, Idaho) that features over 120 top name brands in outdoor gear and apparel. Every time you make a purchase at ProGuide Direct, they will contribute 15% of the sale directly to FTR. That means 15% of every pair of waders, long underwear,

der days too.



Whether you prefer to hang up your fly rod when it snows, or chip ice off your line...

warm this winter, d work wear.

Don't miss this holiday deal!



BUY an Ibex midlayer



ue O! **get a FREE**



BUY Mountain Khakis Pants





woolie underlayer

Get \$15 off an 'MK' Shirt

outdoor gear purchase to FTR

socks, sunglasses, fly line, or whatever you buy! Don't forget to designate "Friends of the Teton River" as your "guide" upon check-out so that we receive credit for your purchase. FTR and ProGuide will also be offering our friends and members special promotional deals on gear and apparel throughout the year—as featured in the advertisement on this page—so keep your eyes "peeled for more deals" and shop to benefit your River and streams!

A Message for Year End

You count on us to protect your watershed.



We count on you for support.

As we wrap up another year here at FTR, we'd like to recognize the importance of your financial contributions to our work. We count on your donations and generosity to keep our projects rolling and our staff working hard for our watershed.

In fact, your **individual donations account for** *half* of our **annual operating income.** The other half is made up of local, state, and federal grants, which wouldn't be possible to obtain without private matching funds

We are proud that your contributions are spent right here in Teton Valley and go directly toward projects and programs that improve fish habitat, water quality, stream flows, and water resource planning—to benefit our community and the future of our precious River and streams.

We hope that you will support our work with a year-end donation.

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Mail your donation using the pre-addressed envelope found in the pages of this newsletter, or make your donation on-line at www.tetonwater.org

Your contribution is a gift that will benefit us all!

It's your fishery.



It's your livelihood.



It's your children's future.



It's your River.



It's *our* mission.

Support your watershed and become a member of Friends of the Teton River today. Friends of the Teton River

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MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

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 - Supporting the watershed we love!

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