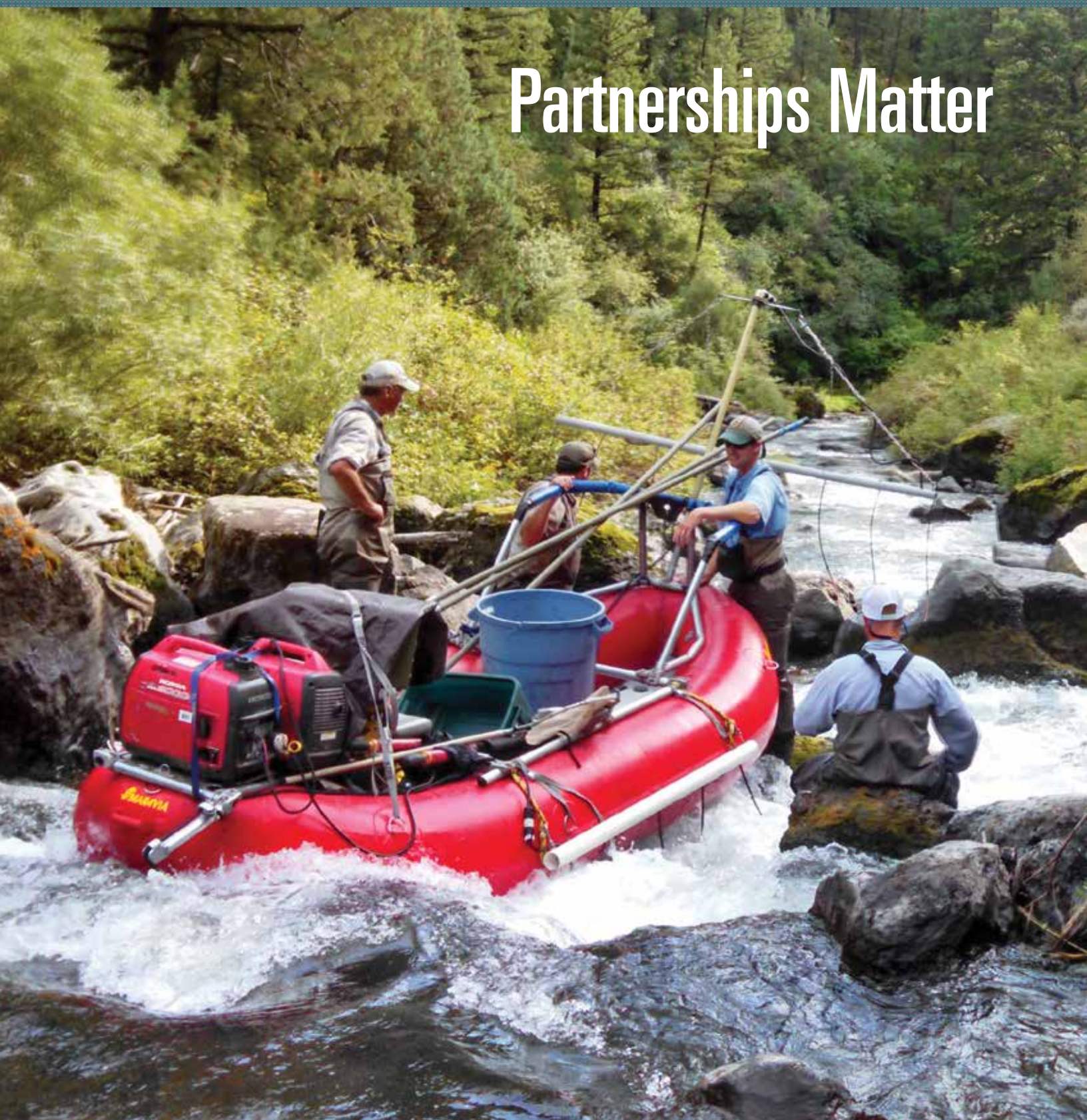




# water lines

FALL/WINTER 2014

## Partnerships Matter





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## Message from the Vice President

**In the world of conservation**, it seems there are two models of getting work done: “go it alone” activism, or collaborating with others with an emphasis on effective partnerships. The former can be attractive because it’s easy to stand on a soapbox. Working effectively with others—who don’t always share your point of view—is much more difficult. But difficulty has its rewards in the form of getting good things done. Establishing effective partnerships within our community, the region, the state, and with national entities remains a core principle for Friends of the Teton River.

The value of good partners was on full display this summer. FTR secured vital fisheries data through cooperative in-stream research with Idaho Fish and Game, Wyoming Game and Fish, and local volunteers. Lugging heavy electrofishing gear and tagging equipment in, and out, of the Teton River and Bitch Creek canyons is not for the faint of heart. But our partners and volunteers are willing and able (and will work for a day of fishing!).

Previous partner-driven fisheries research revealed the need to improve the quantity and timing of water flows in Teton River tributaries. Better flows are critical to bringing back to full health the river’s Yellowstone cutthroat trout (and blunting efforts to have the fish listed as a federal endangered species). Similarly, physical barriers to fish migrations have been a problem. Rather than stand on a soapbox, we’ve rolled up our sleeves to engage government entities, water rights holders, and land-owners. The resulting partnerships have helped enhance numerous tributaries, most recently Teton, Badger, and Canyon creeks.

Before I was able to retire and finally move to this beautiful valley, I spent years inside and out of federal agencies like the Department of the Interior, wrestling with programs like the Endangered Species Act. Issuing edicts and orders might be good for the bureaucratic soul, but it rarely produces good results—unilateral orders simply make people dig in and resist. Having seen FTR’s commitment to partnerships and effective cooperation in the cause of conservation, I was glad to volunteer my services. Despite “warnings” about volunteering in retirement, I now find myself as Vice President. There’s no doubt helping FTR will mean a few less fishing days, but I’m partnering for a cause I believe in. This issue of *Water Lines* highlights those who give time and effort to make this watershed a better place for us all. I hope you will join me in celebrating and supporting their work.

Bill Horn  
FTR Board Vice President



Executive Director  
Amy Verbeten and her  
daughter Greta.

# A Message from the Executive Director

by Amy Verbeten

**"I am more convinced than ever that FTR has exactly what it takes to continue building a lasting legacy of watershed protection."**

In July, my husband Dan and I welcomed our daughter, Greta Rose, into the world. Early mornings have always been a time of reflection for me, and Greta has given me the opportunity to enjoy lots of early mornings in recent weeks. As I've sat with my daughter, watching the sun rise over the eastern boundary of the Teton Watershed, one of the things I've been reflecting on is the concept of legacy. In these past weeks, I've realized how deeply proud I am of the legacy we are creating for little Greta through our work at Friends of the Teton River.

When I refer to the work "we" are doing, I mean all of our partners—from the volunteers who answer the call to help with the "dirty work" of fisheries research to those who inspire the next generation of watershed stewards by teaching in FTR's watershed education program; from the generous donors of all ages who contribute to our work through the Tin Cup Challenge, year-end fundraising campaign, and other events to the business, landowner, and non-profit partners in the Save the Teton River Canyons educational campaign; and from the water right holders, water managers, landowners, and agency partners who put projects on the ground to the dedicated board and staff members who oversee and carry out our mission. FTR's work simply would not be possible without the informed, interested, and active individuals who work with us every day to create a better watershed. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to protect a watershed.

So, on behalf of myself and little Greta, thank you for the incredible work you do to protect and restore this watershed. Your efforts ensure that the Teton River will continue to be a place where we can float and fish and hunt with our children, grandchildren, and grandparents far into the future.

# Remote, Rugged, and Full of Rattlesnakes:

By Allison Michalski



Fisheries hook-and-line survey volunteers Jim Kitchen and Dave Beach take fishing on Bitch Creek very seriously.

Partnerships are an important part of life, particularly in the world of science. In some cases, partnerships are not only important, but also necessary, as they possess the potential to transform an impossible task into a possible one. A perfect example of the transformative power of partnerships is Friends of the Teton River's recent telemetry study. Without the help of partners including Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG), Wyoming Game and Fish (WYGF), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and FTR volunteers, the telemetry study would have presented a seemingly impossible challenge for FTR's small organization. With the help of our partners, however, the initial phases of the study were not only possible, but also a great success.

The purpose of the telemetry study is to monitor the movement of nonnative, invasive species, including rainbow trout, in the several canyon tributaries of the Teton River, particularly Bitch Creek and Canyon Creek. Canyon sites such as Bitch Creek and Canyon Creek are historic Yellowstone cutthroat trout strongholds that currently face a severe threat posed by hybridization as a result of the nonnative presence in these areas. By monitoring the movement of nonnative fish using telemetry tags, FTR and its partners will

eventually be able to determine the location of the spawning grounds of these species, as well as perform a detailed analysis of their genotypes. Ultimately, the genetic analysis will indicate the degree of hybridization occurring in these vital parts of the Yellowstone cutthroat trout's native Teton River range.

Monitoring the movement of nonnative fish species, however, is no easy task in the Teton River canyons. In order to accomplish this task, FTR's Restoration Director Mike Lien called upon FTR's many partners for help. In particular, Lien relied on the many hours of hard work contributed by IDFG and two of FTR's most dependable volunteers: Dave Beach and James Kitchen. You might recognize them from this year's annual River Party as the best bartenders in the barn, but Beach and Kitchen are also accomplished anglers. According to Lien, they were instrumental in the telemetry tagging process. Tagging is a multi-day event that involves hiking into the remote areas of Bitch Creek and Canyon Creek, catching rainbow trout using a hook and line or electrofishing method, housing the fish in "hotels," and hiking back out before dark—and that is only on the first day. On the second day, the crew returns to the site with IDFG and

# Tackling Telemetry Studies in Teton Valley

performs “surgery” on the fish, which includes making a small incision, inserting a telemetry tag, stitching up the incision, and returning the fish to the “hotel” for another night. Finally, on the third day, the crew returns to the site and releases the fish from their “hotels.” Under Lien’s direction, FTR will use airplanes and field crews equipped with receivers to pick up radio signals produced by the telemetry tags during the spawning season next spring.

Lien, Kitchen, and Beach, together with IDFG personnel and other volunteers, have tagged ten fish to date and hope to tag approximately fifty more by the study’s completion. However, with size requirements calling for fish no less than thirteen inches long, the fishing is not without its challenges. Beach and Kitchen are both responsible for sizable catches now named in their honor. Additional challenges include funding, as telemetry tags cost approximately \$230 per unit, and reconnaissance flights will be not cheap. Furthermore, as Lien notes, the terrain in the canyon sections of the Teton River is “remote, rugged, and full of rattlesnakes.” The access makes for long days as traveling to and from the sites is no easy feat, particularly when you are carrying loads of heavy but necessary equipment. Beach joked that he and Kitchen participate in the fishing “just for the research,” but he quickly added that he has a true appreciation for the native fish in this area, as well as the people who are putting energy into this watershed.

**All in a day’s work! IDFG staff and volunteers (from left: Kayden Estep, Jim Kitchen, Quincy Liby, Adrian Forman, and Ellis Smith) take a break from fishing to refuel.**



**Above: Jim Kitchen assumes the netting position on the raft’s bow during an electro-fishing survey on the Teton River last year.**  
**Below: Dave Beach handles a large Yellowstone cutthroat trout, taking measurements during a survey.**



In the future, the data produced by this telemetry study will work to inform the many agencies who make management decisions in Yellowstone cutthroat trout country. These agencies include FTR’s historical partners: IDFG, WYGF, USFWS, and the USFS. With so many different agencies involved, the coordinated management of Yellowstone cutthroat trout country can be difficult, and it is FTR’s sincere hope that this data might ameliorate some of those challenges. Lien said that telemetry work is ultimately so exciting because he never knows which fish will be “the one”—the one that will return to a Bitch Creek or Canyon Creek spawning ground and provide the reconnaissance team with the signal they need to find it. We do know, however, that FTR’s telemetry study would not have been possible with just “one”—it was partnerships all the way.

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\*Our apologies for any errors or omissions. Please contact FTR with any changes.

# It's never too early to give

Meet Aven Kelley. At seven years old, she is the youngest Friends of the Teton River donor (ever). You will find her name next to those of her parents, Whitney Burgess and Tristan Kelley, as contributors to FTR through the Tin Cup Challenge (on the opposing page). Aven decided to donate some of her birthday money to FTR because the Teton River is important for the fish, and it's a place where she has had lots of adventures (already!).

Some of her adventures include the time her dad was catching a fish and almost tipped the boat over, when she and her grandmother encountered a big moose in the middle of the river and had to paddle upstream, and when she witnessed her grandfather "wobble" the canoe and fall out. Many of her stories have to do with swamping a canoe or getting wet (although her parents say this doesn't happen as often as she talks about it). Aven also likes to fish and swim, and her favorite school subject is mathematics.

She thinks other kids should give to FTR, "so the river stays clean and healthy and is always a place you'll want to take your grandfather." Aven, we most certainly agree! And we hope that it will be a place you'll want to keep returning to for years to come. Thanks to young donors and stewards like you, there is a bright future ahead for our watershed.



*At the end of the year,* we reflect on all we've accomplished—all the hours spent on field work and research, educating students and citizens of all ages, and restoring tributaries, spawning grounds, and water to our stream channels. This year, we have focused on "partnerships"—old and new, local and regional, with agencies and individuals—and what it means to collaboratively work together to protect and improve our watershed. It truly takes the hands, ideas, and support of many partners to accomplish such a big job. You, our friends and members, are our most important partners in this work. We sincerely thank you for your contributions to this legacy and hope you will renew your support as we enter another year.

## *Partnerships matter.*

At FTR, we recognize that water plays an essential role in the lives and livelihood of our community and that it takes strong partnerships to accomplish our goals.

*That's why we work closely with a diverse group of stakeholders*—agricultural producers, municipalities, water users—to better manage and conserve water for a variety of needs, and for the future demands on this precious resource. This year we saw the benefits of successful water leases, keeping more water in stream for fish, while providing economic incentives to water right holders.

*That's why we have made educating community members of all ages a cornerstone of our work.* From Trout-in-the-Classroom to Citizen Science Programs, to facilitating stakeholder groups and public forums, we are helping citizens and K-12 students develop their understanding of water-related issues while cultivating community partners, river stewards, and informed decisionmakers.

*That's why we work with regional and national partners to conserve this "last best" refuge* for native Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Using cutting-edge research and restoration technologies and a science-driven approach, we are partnering with agencies and funders to protect and improve this important fishery.

*That's why we invest your contributions and grant dollars into local business partners* on priority projects that will have a long-term impact and the most benefit for our fishery, drinking water, and stream corridors. This fall, we completed a \$300,000 fish passage and habitat restoration project on Canyon Creek, reconnecting over 30 miles of Yellowstone cutthroat trout habitat on this tributary.

## *Be a part(ner) of our legacy today and tomorrow.*

As we continue to meet the current challenges facing our watershed, help us to create a legacy of clean water, healthy streams, and a thriving fishery by making a year-end donation. Your contribution makes you a valuable partner in the work that we do *today*, to protect and improve our water resources for *tomorrow*.

Sincerely,

Development Director

# The “Save the Teton River Canyons”

by Bruce Smithhammer

Big questions loom for the future of the Teton River Canyon and the tributary side-canyons that make up the Teton River Canyons complex—an area so special that, in addition to being one of the last healthy strongholds for Yellowstone cutthroat trout, has been described by Idaho Fish and Game as “critical winter habitat” for mule deer and elk, among other important species in eastern Idaho. Will the Teton Dam be rebuilt? Will tributaries such as Badger and Bitch creeks, which contribute important flows to the main river and hold important trout spawning habitat, be dammed? Will future diversions significantly diminish

out and to demonstrate broad-based support. This includes not just conservation priorities, but legitimate business interests, as well. In the fall of 2013, with supporting grants from 1% for the Tetons and Patagonia, the Save the Teton River Canyons (STRC) coalition was officially formed, and a website and social media components were put in place to communicate these goals to a larger audience.

“Conservation and protection of our natural resources is a vital piece to WorldCast Anglers and our business; it is so important, in fact, that ‘protection and preservation of the environment, all fish, and their supporting watersheds’



**Aaron Pruzan, owner of Rendezvous River Sports, paddles Teton Canyon with friends during high water.**



**Mike Dawkins, co-owner of WorldCast Anglers, ponders the logistics involved in getting a raft down to the river in Teton Canyon.**

critical flows? What really are the downstream irrigation needs? What is the possibility of the existing dam site being de-commissioned?

These and other essential questions regarding the future of the canyons led concerned groups and individuals to the conclusion that it was time for an educational initiative highlighting just how unique and important the Teton Canyons complex really is, and what would be at stake in the event of significant management and/or landscape-level changes. With this educational and collaborative goal in mind, Friends of the Teton River—along with American Rivers, Trout Unlimited, WorldCast Anglers, Teton Valley Lodge, the American Packrafting Association, Rendezvous River Sports, Snake River Waterkeeper, and individual landowners—came together to focus on getting the word

is part of our strategic statement as a company,” says Mike Dawkins, co-owner of WordCast Anglers, one of the largest employers in Teton Valley. “The ability to access such raw, untouched, and pristine land and water in a short travel time is fading fast as our world grows smaller and populations grow bigger. The Teton Canyons are one of those places that need to remain as they are, continuing to protect the Yellowstone cutthroats that call them home.” Without this intact and healthy watershed that trout need to thrive, businesses such as WorldCast and Teton Valley Lodge (in addition to the many local support businesses of the fly fishing/outfitting trade) would lose an operating area critical to their business. For others, such as Rendezvous River Sports, the appeal of such a remote canyon so close to their retail location is a significant benefit.

# Coalition—Partnership in Action

When STRC partner Jon Fenn discusses his reasons for joining the coalition, the factors quite literally hit close to home. “As a landowner with property along the canyons, I became involved in the campaign because I would like to see the canyons protected from development, so that their wild character can be sustained as habitat for wintering big game, in particular mule deer, and so the water quality can be maintained as a stronghold for Yellowstone cutthroat trout. I spend 30-plus days a year in the canyons, and want to continue to enjoy them as a unique wilderness environment where I can find solitude, rattlesnakes, black bears,

directly impact the livelihoods of local residents—and to protecting the reason some individuals have chosen to call the Teton watershed their home—the Save the Teton River Canyons coalition has already succeeded in creating this important initial goal.

So what’s next for the STRC coalition? To continue to highlight the amazing natural history, the many recreational opportunities, and the ways in which clean and healthy headwaters can weave a community together to address a variety of goals that don’t have to be mutually exclusive. The coalition will also continue to spread the word about



**Jon Fenn, a private landowner along the Teton Canyons, with a nice Yellowstone cutthroat.**



**Scott Bosse, of American Rivers, taking time out to enjoy the resource he works to protect.**

wild YCT, and a sense of adventure.”

For Scott Bosse, the Northern Rockies Director of American Rivers, the Teton River represents an example of something increasingly rare. “The Teton is the last major free-flowing river in eastern Idaho, and the Teton Canyons are the wild heart of it,” he says. “Every other river in the area—the Henry’s Fork, the Snake, the South Fork Snake, the Blackfoot, the Portneuf —has been tamed by dams to some extent. The Teton Canyons deserve to remain wild and free.”

The strength of any coalition lies in bringing diverse perspectives and interests to the table to work on a common goal, and to utilize the various resources of each entity for maximum effectiveness. From conservation and wildlife/habitat integrity desires, to business interests that

the various issues facing the canyons. Beyond this, future direction may depend in large part on the decisions made, and the actions taken, as a result of the Henry’s Fork Basin Study Final Report (available for download on the STRC site). This contains, among its list of final recommended “alternatives,” the rebuilding of the Teton Dam, the construction of smaller dams on Teton tributaries, and/or the creation of an artificial reservoir in close proximity to the canyon.

The Save the Teton River Canyons coalition—an example of how diverse partnerships can raise awareness, reach a broader audience, and effectively address multiple goals. For more information on the STRC initiative, and to follow updates on the issues facing the canyons, please go online to [www.savetetonriver.org](http://www.savetetonriver.org).

# When Rivers Teach

By Shannon Brady

Jack Bouma, a Michigan native, made his way to the Rocky Mountains after convincing his dad to let him participate in a geology field camp in Wyoming when he was in college. A former teacher, and a valley resident for the past 11 years, Jack is a dedicated volunteer in the local schools. Motivation to become involved with Friends of the Teton River came after witnessing the hands-on, field-based teaching style of former Education Coordinator Amy Verbeten during a field trip to Teton Canyon. He was inspired by FTR's efforts to engage a diverse group of students in an outdoor classroom setting.

Recently, Jack has been volunteering for FTR's Stream Study program for 4th graders and Geology program for 5th graders, age groups he enjoys teaching because of their capacity to absorb new information

and apply it to their surrounding environment. During a spring creek study this October, there were many moments when students' learning shone brightly as they actively engaged and answered each other's questions. "I heard kids picking out things from their tray of macroinvertebrates and telling the others what that means. They identify it correctly and they are telling them, 'Oh! This must be a cleaner stream. Look! It has this sensitive macroinvertebrate.' When you hear them voicing those kinds of things with confidence, it really is satisfying. You know they have learned something and they are implying it in a way that has meaning."

When Jack is volunteering with FTR, he always comes prepared with hands-on demonstrations to provide an entertaining twist on the teaching material. Jack said he enjoys "fanning the flames of excitement so the students just want to learn more and not feel like I am giving them all the answers, but just giving them more opportunities to enjoy that inquisitiveness, whether its in geology or rocks or some other subject."

Despite Jack's previous knowledge of groundwater and surface water processes, he knew little about stream ecology prior to his involvement with FTR. It is time spent volunteering has greatly expanded his personal awareness of the interdisciplinary nature of the earth sciences. He is passionate about the programs, learning new material, and exploring new places in our valley.

Not only do Teton Valley K-12 students have the opportunity to participate in FTR's watershed science programs several times throughout their educational experience, they also get the chance to learn insightful information from volunteers. Folks like Jack Bouma are extremely valued in our community and we are grateful for the time they dedicate to our programs.



Volunteer educator, Jack Bouma, explains how groundwater moves through permeable soil layers to 4th grade students during a stream study at Six Springs Ranch in Driggs.

# New Staff



Shannon Brady on the summit of Disappointment Peak in Grand Teton National Park.

Shannon Brady grew up in western Massachusetts near the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains and in the heart of the Connecticut River Valley. She acquired her B.S. in geology from Union College in New York, and made her way to Teton Valley after receiving her M.S. in geology from Idaho State University. Shannon is dedicated to exploring the outdoors through recreation, and she has a strong perseverance for observing and understanding natural processes in the field. Her favorite science disciplines include limnology and volcanology, making the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem the ideal place to apply her studies. Shannon is excited by any opportunity to educate youth about the natural history, flora, fauna, and physical processes that occur within the environments encompassed by Teton Valley. She is looking forward to gaining more teaching experience through FTR's watershed science programs. Outside of the office and classroom, you will likely find her skiing, rock climbing, floating, or running with her dog.





## Remembering a Dear Friend

by Anna Lindstedt

It's difficult to lose someone sooner than you thought you would. And it's pretty near impossible to say all of the things you'd like to when confined to a page—especially when remembering such a fine friend and philanthropist as John Siverd, who passed away in his beloved Teton Valley this May at the age of 68.

After a successful career on Wall Street and an early retirement, John and his wife Nancy moved to Alta, Wyoming, in 2001. It didn't take long for both of them to settle in and get involved with the community as volunteers and board members of local nonprofit groups. John and I came to Friends of the Teton River at about the same time in 2004. I was a young outdoor educator forging my career path, and he had traded in a life of finance to get his hands dirty and his fly line wet. I worked closely with John for over seven years in his capacity as a board member and president at FTR, and was lucky to call him a personal mentor and cheerleader.

**"The meaning of life  
is to find your gift.  
The purpose of life is  
to give it away."  
- Pablo Picasso**

It was Pablo Picasso who said, "The meaning of life is to find your gift." John had many gifts; they weren't hard to find. Among them, he was a natural leader, communicator, comedian, motivator, and spokesperson. Picasso went on to say, "The purpose of life is to give it away." And in this department, John excelled. He gave of himself wholeheartedly—lending his expertise (and giving "free" advice), generously supporting causes (with his personal time and pocketbook), and sharing his passion for life (dinner parties, golf, and fishing!). By giving so greatly of himself, he raised countless others up around him.

John and I, coincidentally, shared a love for writing limericks. I wrote one for him to celebrate his service to FTR a few years back, and read it at his memorial service this spring. I couldn't think of a better way to honor him, than to share a few versus from this poem.

## In Memorial

**John Siverd  
1946-2014**

*There once was a man from Wall Street  
Who moved West to wear boots on his feet  
He left from the East, to fish and hunt beasts  
And at the head of our Board is his seat.*

*John loves to catch trout on a fly  
and if you ask him "how many?" he'll try  
to convince you he caught somewhere between naught  
and thousands of fish on a dry.*

*John advocates for us at every event  
Bringing Tin Cup donations to the tent  
Out raising funds, to get our work done  
And on our mission this money is spent.*

*To some, he's been like a father  
And when you start to worry, don't bother  
He'd advise us like his kids (and he probably did)  
He thinks of us as a son and five daughters.*

*We don't want his tenure to end  
We could start this limerick all over again...  
So, let's all raise a glass to a man with real class  
May your fly rod have a permanent bend!*

*A finer man ne'er has there been  
Always donning a hat and a grin  
And it's not a line to say "the luck is all mine"  
To call you, John Siverd, my friend.*





Friends of the Teton River  
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PO Box 768  
Driggs, ID 83422

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# Fall Photo Contest Winners



Best wildlife photo  
submitted by Kyle Jensen



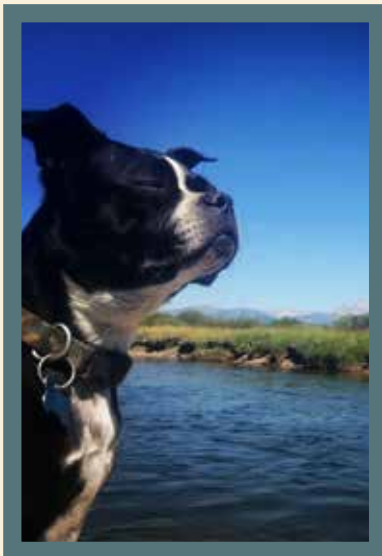
Best kid photo  
submitted by Hilary Ordonez



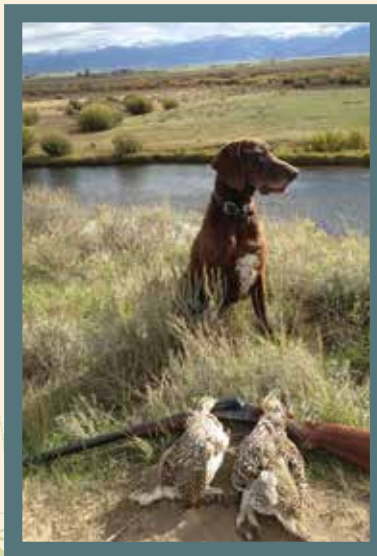
Best fish photo - Vance Freed  
with a gigantic cut-bow on the  
lower Teton, submitted by World-  
Cast Anglers

## Dogs love the Teton River!

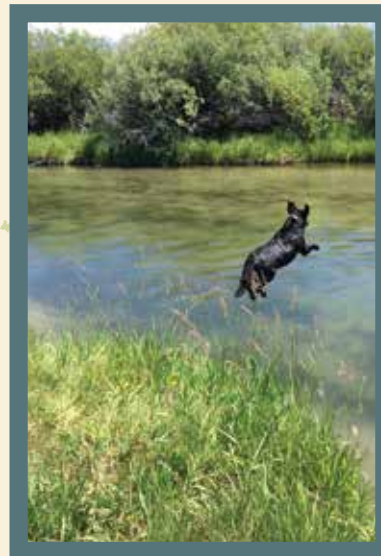
It was too hard to choose a winner, so here are our favorites...



Most Zen dog, Olivia  
submitted by Allison Michalski



Best hunting dog, Curtis  
submitted by Hilary Ordonez



Best swimming dog, Remy  
the black Lab  
submitted by Allison Anthony