



water lines

WINTER 2015/16

Rivers Connect Us



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Message from the President

“Don’t count your years, make your years count,” excellent birthday advice offered by an unknown sage. As Friends of the Teton River celebrates its fifteenth year, our goal is to do just that, by taking actions that will conserve our favorite river and its fish, wildlife, and water. The foundation of strong leadership, cooperative conservation, and science-based decision making built in our first years enables FTR to enjoy today’s excellent relationships with valley residents, farmers and ranchers, water users, government agencies, and myriads of others who care about the Teton Watershed. All those who contributed to this success can look back with pride. Being a relative newcomer to FTR, I can’t take personal credit for these achievements. But I can promise that the present staff and board will continue to do their best to maintain and enhance the fine reputation FTR has earned.

Looking ahead, we intend to pursue conservation strategies that will be cause for celebration fifteen years from now—and sooner. Some of our biggest challenges are likely to come from interests, institutions, and federal law far removed from Teton Valley. The potential for a federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing for Yellowstone cutthroat trout is one example. Odds are strong that activists will press hard to have Yellowstone cutthroat listed as endangered under the ESA. Unfortunately, the ESA is an inflexible law (as I learned when I spent four years in charge of implementing it under President Reagan) and if Yellowstone cutthroat are federally listed, the species must be protected regardless of costs or consequences. Adverse impacts on anglers, farmers, ranchers, water users, and valley residents would be probable.

Fortunately, recent action on sage grouse provides a model for us to follow. Activists petitioned the federal government for a sage grouse ESA listing. However, the federal government declined to list the species, citing aggressive and effective cooperative conservation measures adopted by the states, including Idaho. FTR believes that locally developed, cooperative conservation is the best way to restore Yellowstone cutthroat, without the unpredictable effects that could follow an ESA listing. We will continue working together with landowners, agencies, scientists, and citizens to conserve and restore Yellowstone cutthroat in the Teton River watershed, via effective but flexible means, and to thus forestall an ESA listing.

We need your help with these efforts, and many others that are important to you. Please join us as we cooperatively work to restore and conserve a healthy Teton River watershed.

With thanks,

Bill Horn
FTR Board President



A Message from the Executive Director

Executive Director
Amy Verbeten with daughter Greta (15 months) on the Colorado River.

"In most of the West, whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting over, but here in Teton Valley, we believe that water is something that brings us together."

Amazingly, 2016 marks Friends of the Teton River's fifteenth year of operation. Most of the time, when we talk about this organization's accomplishments over the years, we focus on the tangible, quantifiable metrics: millions of dollars invested into our local economy; tens of thousands of dump truck loads of sediment reduced by habitat restoration work; thousands of fish tagged to better understand and protect our fishery; and miles of streams re-watered.

While these measurable outcomes are certainly something to be proud of, they leave out the work that makes all of the accomplishments possible: building and maintaining relationships with a diverse group of people in our community, from our valley's newest residents, to those who have been here for generations.

One of the reasons we talk less about our work to connect people and water is that, even though it's incredibly important, it is also really hard to measure. How, for example, do we measure the importance of supportive words from a fifth generation farmer who, ten years ago, regularly argued with our staff, but who is now willing to publicly acknowledge the great work FTR has done to help improve water management practices? How do we place value on the excitement in an angler's voice while sharing photos of a huge fluvial Yellowstone cutthroat trout caught in the upper reaches of Canyon Creek, Teton Creek, or North and South Leigh Creeks—something they haven't been able to do for decades?

How do we measure lifelong friendships fostered among participants on our floats? Or the excitement in a fourth grader's voice as she makes a connection between the snow pit she's measuring at Grand Targhee, and the water she uses to brush her teeth each morning? How do we quantify the change we've seen over the past fifteen years, from competing with other nonprofits over limited dollars, to working in powerful collaborations? How do we capture in words or numbers the strong commitment from landowners who are now working with us to raise money for farming implements that improve water quality?

Founding Executive Director Lyn Benjamin loved to say, "In most of the West, whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting over, but here in Teton Valley, we believe that water is something that brings us together." As FTR celebrates fifteen years, I believe that water connects us more deeply than ever—however you choose to measure it. We look forward to continuing to tell these stories and creating new ones in the years to come.

Amy Verbeten
FTR Executive Director

Connecting the Dots:

By Amy Verbeten, Mike Lien, and Tim Owen



Fisheries surveys and anecdotal reports from anglers indicate that large, river-run cutthroat (like this one caught by FTR fisheries crew leader Tim Owen) are making it up Canyon, Teton, Trail, and South Leigh creeks in larger numbers than have been seen in decades.



Friends of the Teton River completed an impressive fisheries research effort this summer, thanks to help from Henry's Fork Foundation (HFF) interns, staff from Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) and Wyoming Game and Fish, and numerous volunteers. Starting in 2005, this research has been part of a ten-year fisheries population study that has been tracking Yellowstone cutthroat trout populations in the major tributaries of the Teton River watershed. It has created the largest data set anywhere for this native species.

FTR's next big task will be to analyze all of this data, and use it to identify trends and conservation needs. As of late fall 2015, FTR has ten years of tributary trout population trends to analyze, ten years of flow data to analyze, six years of PIT tag monitoring site data to interpret, six years of rainbow/cutthroat hybridization trends to review, and five years of stream temperature data to analyze. This analysis, combined with IDFG's bi-annual Teton River population surveys, will yield the first ever population and abundance estimate for the Teton watershed, effectively quantifying just how many Yellowstone cutthroat live in the watershed. FTR will release a detailed report that will paint a picture of fisheries trends in the watershed, allowing us to quantify the importance of the Teton watershed for Yellowstone cutthroat trout range-wide, to track changes—positive or negative—in the species over time, to evaluate the success of existing restoration projects, and to prioritize future conservation needs for the species. Additionally, FTR is working with Dr. Robert Al-Chokhachy, of the U.S. Geological Survey, to begin predicting future fisheries population trends using a fish vulnerability model.

The innovative approach taken by this collaborative project will be used to identify and prioritize conservation needs for Yellowstone cutthroat, not only in the Teton River watershed, but across their range. Dr. Al-Chokhachy, Dr. Rob Van Kirk (HFF), IDFG Regional Fisheries Manager Dan Garren, FTR, and other members of the Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Interstate Working Group will prioritize the top strategies for restoring Yellowstone cutthroat trout, and use the approach as a model to help fisheries managers conserve native inland trout species across the West.

FTR has telemetry tagged 56 rainbow and rainbow/cutthroat trout hybrids in the Teton River canyons. FTR Fisheries crew member Matt Hively accompanied pilot Alex Egbert, of Ace Aviation, on more than a dozen flights over the canyons to track the locations and timing of the tagged fishes' movements.

The season's work included electrofishing and hook-and-line surveys of more than 160 sites, encompassing every major tributary to the Teton River. Crew members hiked more than 450 miles, carrying packs and equipment weighing up to eighty pounds, over rugged but beautiful terrain.

Ten Years of Fisheries Research



In mid-September, FTR staff and volunteers assisted Idaho Fish and Game with an electrofishing survey of the Teton River. Later in the month, FTR and IDFG joined forces to conduct an electrofishing survey of the South Fork of the Teton below Sugar City, Idaho.



Notable fish and wildlife encounters included catching a twenty-one-inch Yellowstone cutthroat in Bitch Creek; a day with seventeen moose sightings on the Teton River; watching a bald eagle eat a young Canada goose in the Teton River Canyon; watching a mother moose nudge her newly born and still-wet calf to standing in the aptly named Moose Creek drainage; and encountering six rattlesnakes on a single hike into Bitch Creek.

My Summer "Vacation"



FTR's summer 2015 fisheries intern, Cirque Gammelin, with a twenty-one-inch cutthroat trout caught during an electrofishing survey on Bitch Creek.

By Cirque Gammelin

It's hard for me to believe my field season with Friends of the Teton River is already over. Watching the last cutthroat migrate out of Bitch Creek, it feels as though it was only last week that we electrofished our first site of the season. This summer has been one of incredible adventure and learning, and I wish it could have lasted forever.

As the FTR high school intern, I have been fortunate to be a part of this year's cutthroat population survey for the Teton River watershed. Over the summer I have learned a massive amount about fish, conservation, and the watershed, all through hours spent hiking and floating the Teton River and its tributaries. As an avid fisherman, being able to handle fish every day has made this internship one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

At the close of this season, I am excited to start my next adventure. After a gap year in Central America, I will be heading to college where I want to study environmental science and biology. Thanks to this internship, I have strengthened my interest in fish and the environment, and that will last a lifetime.

Teton Valley Farms and Fish Initiative:



Friends of the Teton River and the Teton Soil Conservation District (TSCD) have recently entered into a unique partnership, which aims to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and benefit both agricultural producers and Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

Under the leadership of Board Chairman Lynn Bagley, the TSCD has been working with Lindsay Markegard, District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, to implement a soil health initiative in Teton County.

“Soil health is our first priority. Soil health is crucial, and there are so many benefits to our producers, including less water runoff, 50 percent less soil erosion, increased production with cover crops, and more nutrients in the soil,” says Bagley.

Project Partners

The Teton Soil Conservation District is one of Idaho’s 50 Conservation Districts, which were formed to comply with federal laws enacted in response to the Dust Bowl disaster. Conservation Districts serve as the state’s primary entities to provide assistance to private landowners and land users in the conservation, sustenance, improvement, and enhancement of Idaho’s natural resources.

Since 1996, the **Natural Resources Conservation Service** and TSCD have led efforts through joint programs, working with agricultural producers to improve water quality in the region.

FTR (with oversight from IDEQ) has been monitoring surface water quality in the region since 2001. FTR has partnered with the NRCS, TSCD, and private landowners to raise funds and implement restoration projects designed specifically to reduce erosion and improve water quality. While conditions have improved, water quality impairment continues to be a significant concern for humans and Yellowstone cutthroat trout, which is a designated “Idaho species of greatest concern.”

What is No-Till Agriculture?

One of the biggest contributors to soil degradation is the simple process of plowing fields. While this method of agriculture has been practiced for hundreds of years, and many agricultural producers know no other way, the process of tilling is actually harmful to soil over time. Tilled soil is highly prone to wind and water erosion, and requires increasing amounts of fertilizer and water input in order to retain its long-term fertility. No-till farming is just what it sounds like. No-till methods avoid disturbing the soil with tools like field cultivators, disks, and plows, and leaves crop residue on the surface, absorbing water, limiting runoff, and improving soil structure over time. No-till can also save significant labor and fuel costs, since it reduces the number of hours of running farm equipment to work a piece of ground.

In addition to improving soil conditions for farmers, numerous sources indicate that no-till agriculture can significantly improve water quality by reducing the erosion of sediment into water sources. This is great news for the Teton Watershed, as the Teton River and many of its tributaries are identified as “impaired waters” by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) and at risk of excessive sediment and nutrient input from crop production by the USDA.



A no-till drill minimizes the need for burning and tilling, allowing farmers to plant seeds directly into grain residue or a cover crop. This improves water quality and soil health, while reducing labor and fuel costs for the farmer.

No Till Demonstration Project

By Tina Dean, Teton Soil Conservation District Administrative Manager, and Amy Verbeten, FTR Executive Director

No-Till Drill Demonstration Project

TSCD and FTR recognize the potential for no-till agriculture to further reduce soil erosion and improve water quality, while also directly benefitting agricultural producers, so they are teaming up to implement a no-till farming demonstration project in Teton County. Through this project, the two groups are working cooperatively to raise \$60,000 for the purchase of a no-till seed drill. The drill will be rented at very low cost to local farmers, allowing them to plant seeds directly into crop residue or cover crops. “Project ambassadors” are also being recruited to experiment with no-till methods, including the use of cover crops, which are planted after a farmer’s primary crop has been harvested, and serve to naturally increase soil nitrogen while anchoring soil, suppressing weeds, and preventing wind and water erosion. Project ambassadors will host tours and workshops for other farmers, sharing their experiences and promoting the use of the drill.

“A no-till drill at Teton Soil Conservation District would provide area producers with the opportunity to try no-till planting,” says Harley Hill, a project participant, local organic farmer, and TSCD Board Member. “It is difficult to rent or purchase a no-till drill just to try it out, making it not feasible for the producer to rent [one] for testing.”

Bagley echoes these sentiments. “We have a unique situation in Teton Valley that will be totally different from other places. We need to be able to try it out and see what the benefits are specifically for our producers,” he says.

Hill adds, “No-till planting is an environmentally friendly and economical option that needs promoting. As chemical costs increase, and environmental pressure increases, no-till is definitely in our future as an agronomically, economically, and environmentally sound option for some of our crops.”

For generations, fields have been burned and/or plowed following harvest, in preparation for spring planting.



Working Together for Farms and Fish

Tina Dean, speaking on behalf of the TSCD Board at a recent presentation to the Upper Snake Basin Advisory Group, recognized that this project represents a partnership between conservation interests and agricultural producers that is unique in Idaho. “We are pleased with the partnership that has been formed with Friends of the Teton River and hope that this relationship with the producers of Teton County and this conservation organization can set an example to the community, as working together for mutual goals and successes,” says Dean. TSCD and FTR hope this project will become a model for similar partnerships throughout the region.

FTR and TSCD are actively fundraising for this project, currently seeking at least \$10,000 in private matching donations that are necessary to qualify for government grant funds. If you are interested in helping to support this important work, please contact Amy Verbeten (amy@tetonwater.org, 208-354-3871 x 13) or Tina Dean (tetonscd@silverstar.com, 208-354-2680 x 3).

New Headgate on Desert Canal Connects People and Water

By Amy Verbeten & Sarah Lien



The Desert Canal irrigation diversion and adjacent South Leigh Creek has been given a facelift after being a high priority for many years. It was first identified by Friends of the Teton River staff in a 2006 survey as a major barrier to fish passage and given top priority for improvement. In 2012, Biota Research and Consulting contacted FTR on behalf of the Strong family, who are general partners in ownership of the land where the Desert Canal diversion headgate is located. The Strongs were interested in improving conditions on the stream and helping to restore the fishery. Ryan Colyer of Biota worked with the Strongs, FTR, the Teton Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to raise funds to remove the fish barrier, and contracted FTR to reach out to the landowners who have water rights served by the Desert Canal.

As is the case with many irrigation canals in Idaho, the ownership of the Desert Canal diversion structures is complicated—the owner of the land on which an irrigation diversion is located often has no actual ownership rights for the structure, and many of the water-right holders who collectively own it have little knowledge of the water delivery system or where the diversion is even located. In some cases, the water-right holders are banks or other large companies with little interest in local issues. Fortunately, FTR was able to connect with Kane Brightman, a landowner with water rights on the Desert Canal who serves as the de facto operator.

FTR secured written permission from a majority of the water-right holders on the canal, and Colyer worked closely with Brightman to modify and adapt plans to remove the channel-spanning concrete structure that was preventing fish passage, and to replace the old headgate structure. At Brightman's request, Colyer incorporated a water measuring device that complied with Idaho law. Brightman has also been work-

ing with local water master Nick Olsen to ensure that water rights are properly administered, and has been assisting FTR with ensuring that the water it is leasing from a water-right holder in the Desert Canal system is being delivered.

The work of this diverse collaborative—water right holders, nonprofits, landowners, environmental consulting firms, and numerous funders—and the cumulative investment of approximately \$150,000, has yielded positive results so far. Through the installation of the new headgate structure, Brightman is able to better regulate the quantity of water diverted into the Desert Canal. By replacing the channel-spanning concrete barrier with fish-friendly step pools, fish are able to migrate upstream even during those times when water in South Leigh Creek is scarce.

Changes in water administration, combined with the delivery of water leased by FTR, have helped ensure that the water-right holders on Desert Canal are able to call for and receive their legal water rights, and have kept South Leigh Creek flowing weeks longer than usual. Importantly, for the first time in decades, there have been numerous reports of large fluvial cutthroat trout in upper South Leigh Creek. However, Brightman is the first to point out that more work is needed at the canal.

“There are definitely some things we need to work out with sediment accumulating in and around the diversion, but the new headgate is working,” says Brightman. “The biggest issue, though, is that fish are still ending up in the canals and the fields. Fish screens are definitely needed.”

FTR has begun identifying funding sources for future work, including the installation of fish screens. We are actively seeking private matching donations, which are required to be eligible for federal grant dollars. If you are interested in supporting this project, please contact FTR Development Director Anna Lindstedt (anna@tetonwater.org, 208-354-3871 x 12).

WaterWise Teton Valley

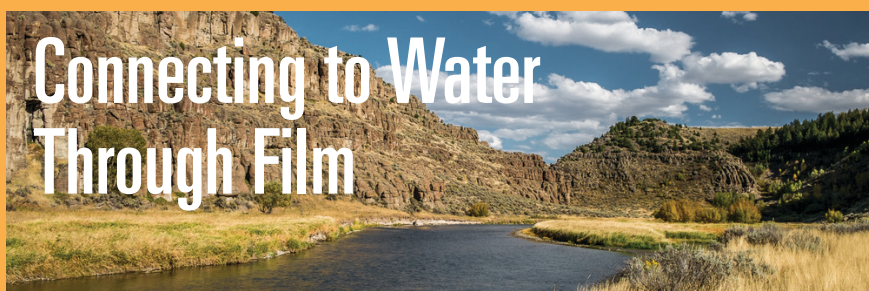
By Shannon Brady, Education Coordinator

Thanks to funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Education Grant Program, FTR will kickoff a two-year, community-wide program aimed at improving human health and the environment in the Teton River watershed through community education and outreach. The Teton Valley *WaterWise* Initiative will provide numerous educational offerings for youth and adults, focused on protecting clean, safe drinking water sources.

This initiative emerged from the recommendations made by Teton County's first Drinking Water Protection Committee, formed in 2011. The goal of this committee was to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to create a Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) that protects all drinking water sources in the county. The committee recognized that most Teton Valley residents enjoy high quality drinking water, yet were also concerned that research conducted prior to development of the SWPP revealed water quality issues in some portions of the county are of significant concern, both now and in the future.

Over the next two years, Teton Valley *WaterWise* will engage local students in clean drinking water awareness by revamping the sixth grade Water Awareness Week Program, and by training high school students to conduct well water testing. FTR will involve local adults in the effort by bringing back the *WaterWise* Community Education Series (see the Events Calendar on this page for more details), working with the Drinking Water Protection Committee to develop and implement incentives and best management practices that reduce the risk of drinking water contamination, and by distributing targeted drinking water quality education materials throughout Teton County.

Additionally, a portion of EPA funding that FTR receives will be given to other organizations through a sub-grants program, to ensure that a diverse segment of Teton Valley's population is engaged in project activities. Keep an eye out for upcoming events and more information on sub-grants so you can be *WaterWise* and help protect Teton Valley's high quality drinking water!



As part of our upcoming *WaterWise* series, keep an eye out for FTR's Widescreen Watersheds premiere in May 2016! Thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation of Teton Valley to purchase film equipment, we are now capable of documenting teachers and students working in the field and sharing their experiences with the community. Together with hands-on field activities, science communicated through film will be an effective learning tool for Teton Valley students of all ages.

This fall, FTR participated in 1% for the Tetons' Video Blitz film competition. Local filmmakers were partnered with regional non-profits to document their grant programs in action, and films were aired at the Center for the Arts in Jackson Hole on October 16th. Ian Avery Leaf from Salt Lake City worked with FTR to capture the story behind the Save the Teton River Canyon Coalition. It features an interview with Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard. You can link to the video from the homepage on our website www.tetonwater.org

Wednesday *WaterWise* Calendar

Wednesday *WaterWise* is a monthly community education series designed to bring people together around water. Through presentations, events, and hands-on workshops, we explore the ways water connects the economy, community, and environment in the Teton watershed. Look for more information about location and times for these upcoming *WaterWise* events:

January 13 **Safe to Drink?**

Learn about Teton Valley's drinking water, and what you can do to protect it, including information about septic tank maintenance and household hazardous waste disposal.

February 10

Healthy Farms, Healthy Communities

Find out how local farmers, the Teton Soil Conservation District, and agricultural advisors are working together with FTR to improve farm yields while contributing to healthy ecosystems and community partnerships.

March 9

Water Law 101: Questions about water rights?

We have answers! Learn how to find out whether you have a water right, how you can use your right, and much more.

April 13

FREE Well Water Testing

Want to know if your well water is safe to drink? Drop by for FREE well water testing for nitrates, and learn more about well safety and drinking water protection.

May 11

***WaterWise* Celebration**

Join local students, storytellers, and artists in a celebration of the role of water in our everyday lives and how it's connected to our economy, community, and environment.

Connecting with FTR Members Old and New

'Golden Stone Member' Dan Burr

Dan Burr is a longtime member of FTR, and a fishing guide, illustrator, and teacher at BYU-Idaho. You may recognize Dan as a former FTR Board member and the artist who creates the beautiful images for our poster artwork every year. Dan lives near South Leigh Creek in Teton.

FTR: What do you love most about the Teton River?

DB: The Teton River is really close to my heart. I consider it the life of Teton Valley: beautiful, inspiring, and a fun place to fish. My connection to the river and my reason for living in Teton Valley is the Teton River. I'll wait out the whole winter just for summer on that river. It fills my soul.

FTR: What do you see as an important challenge facing the Teton River?

DB: One simple answer: overuse. [Today], there are so

many people, because the fishing is so good, and the valley is so beautiful. My fear is that the overuse and lack of education about this incredible, pristine, and fragile resource will cause the resource to go back to what it was—bad.

FTR: What will be FTR's biggest accomplishment over the course of the next fifteen years?

DB: FTR's biggest accomplishment over the course of the next fifteen years will be to continue to educate the general public about the value of this pristine river and the Teton watershed. Stay on track; don't give up! Efforts must be greater because of new usage. The

only way that will happen is if somebody makes it happen, somebody like FTR. The good news: Fish came up South Leigh this year! [Resulting from recent restoration work by FTR]



'Nymph Member' Cheyenne Brown

Cheyenne Brown is a recent member of FTR, and grew up in central Idaho's Gospel Hump Wilderness at Shepp Ranch on the banks of the Salmon River. She currently resides in Teton Valley, where she serves as Outfitting Manager for the National Outdoor Leadership School in Driggs. She and her dog, Konza, enjoy a wide variety of activities here in the valley, including but not limited to hiking, biking, skiing, and boating.

FTR: What do you love most about the Teton River?

CB: The Teton River is a sort of nexus for the Teton Valley community. ...It brings together so many different sorts of folks; it's pretty cool.

FTR: What do you see as an important challenge facing the Teton River?

CB: One of the big issues in the next few years will be early runoff and above average water temperatures that will

have an impact on the ecology of the watershed. Also, I think we will continue to see shifts in land use that will impact the watershed.

FTR: What will be FTR's biggest accomplishment over the course of the next fifteen years?

CB: FTR is a grassroots, community-based organization that is doing some significant work and research in the Teton watershed. The future of successful watershed conservation is going to be organizations like FTR working on the ground with local stakeholders and working at the community level. I reckon that FTR's biggest achievement over the course of the next fifteen years will be to play a role in keeping the Teton watershed healthy, not only through fisheries work, but also through community engagement as we respond to any number of challenges arising out of social, political, or environmental issues.



**Thank You
Donors!**

**Donations
April - October 2015**

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Teton River Steward (\$10,000+)

Yvon Chouinard



Anna and her husband Nick having some fun on a family trip to Redfish Lake last summer.

A (Fun)raising Message

As this organization celebrates its fifteenth year of operation, I have spent eleven years in service to it, with eight of those as the Development Director (the grant writer, event planner, de-facto CFO, Marketing/PR Director, graphic designer, and bar-back). More often these days, I am asked, “Why do you do what you do?” And sometimes I’m tempted to give one of the following pithy answers:

- a) *I’ve always dreamed of being a nonprofit fundraising professional; right after ballerina, architect, or brain surgeon.*
- b) *Raising a \$380,000 annual budget and millions of project dollars is so glamorous, darling.*
- c) *I mean, hey, I get a really good deal on waders.*

But the truth is, for me, the fundraising isn’t the most important part (gasp!). Yes, raising money is essential to accomplishing our work, just not the most important reason why I’m still at this job. My answer to the question is:

- d) *I love connecting people with the Teton River.*

My path to conservation nonprofit work was a departure from my social science training, but also right in line with my anthropological perspective (and love of rivers and the outdoors). For me, building support for conservation is as much about connecting with the people as what I’m trying to protect. Whether it’s connecting people with a cause, working with partners to meet mutual goals, or inspiring others to become involved, it comes down to the people who make the difference.

In the fast-paced world of social media posts of, “likes,” tweets, and texts, we at FTR want to spend more time connecting with the most important part of our work...you. While many of our outreach efforts will stay the same, we want to focus on having more conversations, friend-raisers, and fun with our community, and share what really connects us to water and to each other.

A (slightly) amended passage by one of my favorite authors, Ed Abbey, echoes my sentiments: “It is not enough to [fundraise] for the [river]; it is even more important to enjoy it. While you can. While it’s still here. So get out there and hunt and fish and mess around with your friends, ramble out yonder and explore the forests, climb the mountains...run the rivers, breathe deep of that yet sweet and lucid air, sit quietly for a while and contemplate the precious stillness, the lovely, mysterious, and awesome space.”

Of course, we will need your financial support to meet our goals to conserve this awesome river valley, and that of your friends and neighbors, too! We encourage you to connect with us on a deeper level, too—on a float, at an event, or as a new member—and share what you love about the Teton River. You can start by mailing us the postcard found in the center fold of this newsletter. Tell us about a favorite Teton River moment, ask us a question, or send us a “Happy Fifteenth Birthday” message.

I look forward to connecting with you!

Anna Lindote

Development Director

Please remember us with a **year-end gift**. Or share your support of FTR with a gift membership for your friends and family. A donation envelope is found in the center fold of this newsletter.

Happy Holidays!

John Short Legacy Fund Donors (in Memorial)

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Thank you 8th Annual Tin Cup Challenge Donors!



FTR had 200 donors to the Tin Cup Challenge this year, including 136 repeat donors from the previous year. We can’t thank you enough for choosing to support your river and our work through this community-wide giving event.



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Happy 15th Birthday FTR!

Happy crystal anniversary FTR—

*wishing you glassy waters and plenty of time to fish for the big fifteen!
We're celebrating this milestone by featuring Happy Birthday messages
from some of our members, new and old. Here's to the past, present, and
future of FTR and its work in the Teton watershed.*

Dan Burr, Local Artist and Fishing Guide (see pg. 10):

A gigantic congratulations on an incredible job really, really well done—on saving this river. Hearty, hearty congratulations on not only the restoration work, but also congratulations for helping people to understand...and continuing to work with those people.

Dan Garren, Regional Fisheries Manager:

It's been great watching your organization grow over the past decade and a half. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game appreciates your involvement in keeping the Teton (and other waters) healthy and productive!

Rob Van Kirk, Henry's Fork Foundation Senior Scientist:

I remember the days before FTR, when even the concept of an organization dedicated to conservation of the Teton River and its fisheries was just that—a concept. Fifteen years later, I wish you a Happy Birthday and look forward to the next fifteen years of working together for clean water, healthy streams and resilient fisheries.

Phil Lansing, Crusty Yet Benign Commercial Fishing Skipper:

Happy birthday FTR! You don't catch fish just by talking about them, you have to get your gear in the water. And FTR, you are our gear. Thank you from my heart's bottom for doing what you do!

