



water lines

WINTER 2016/2017

Common Ground





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Horn, President
Lee Holmes, Vice President
Kim Keeley, Secretary
Chris Jensen
Jen Pierce
Dean Scheid
Gini Van Siclen

KEY PARTNERS

Bonneville Environmental Foundation
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Idaho Department of Water Resources
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service, Caribou-Targhee National Forest
Wyoming Game and Fish Department

STAFF

Amy Verbeten, Executive Director
Anna Lindstedt, Development Director
Allison Michalski, Outreach Coordinator
Mike Lien, Restoration Director
Sarah Lien, Water Resources Director
Shannon Brady, Education Director

Cover Photo: Amy Verbeten

Production: PowderMountainPress.com

Friends of the Teton River

18 N. Main Street, Suite 310
PO Box 768
Driggs, ID 83422

(208) 354-3871 info@tetonwater.org
www.tetonwater.org

After years of listening to and learning from local agricultural producers, FTR has joined forces with the Teton Soil Conservation District, the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Driggs Field Office, and numerous local farmers and ranchers on a Soil Health Initiative that aims to protect and improve water quality in the Teton River, while reducing soil erosion, improving agricultural business practices and returns, and benefitting native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout.

Dear Friends,

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Lynn Bagley. I have lived in Victor my entire life, and I love this valley—the people and our natural resources. We have all come to the valley under different circumstances. For me, my grandmother was the second pioneer born in Teton Valley, so I have deep historical roots here. What I feel is important or valuable to this valley will be different than someone else's feelings.

My grandfather raised sheep; my dad herded sheep all around the south end of the valley east of Victor, on what was called the Badlands, and the west side of the Big Holes. Later, we had cattle on the west side allotment and my brother still ranges cattle there.

During my lifetime, we had dairy cows and beef cows, and raised hay and barley. We did raise some potatoes when I was younger. The hay was stacked in the field with a hay boat and a hay elevator. We used a team and wagon during the winter to feed the cows. Everyone helped with the harvest. School was out for one or two weeks in the fall so we could dig potatoes, finish putting up the meadow hay, and combine grain. Agriculture has always been important to me. That is my life. It puts food on the table and pays the bills.

Water was our lifeblood. We had to have a big snowpack in order to fill the canals so we could flood irrigate our fields during the summer months. The flood irrigation not only provided water for our crops, but also created springs and wetlands along the Teton River. Flood irrigation filled our aquifer and provided higher stream flows in the fall months.

Fishing and hunting was our opportunity for a break from hard work and to have some fun and also provide food for the winter. My first fishing pole was a willow with the bark peeled off and a string with a hook tied to the end. Opening day of fishing season was like a holiday, but you had to be out at the crack of dawn to claim a spot at your favorite fishing hole first. Wildlife and fishing were very important to me.

Let's fast forward to now. Many people have moved here because of the beauty of Teton Valley, the many recreational activities available to us, and the needed workforce in Jackson, Wyoming. We all want to protect our wildlife, fish, and water. Where you grew up influences how you feel this should be done. These differences cause many misunderstandings and bad feelings toward each other. Mistrust runs rapid and fuels bad feelings. So, what do we do?

“It will take all of us working together, listening and understanding, and being respectful, to keep Teton Valley a beautiful place for all of us to live.”

First, let's focus on what we agree on because we agree on more than we think. Will we always agree? No, and we shouldn't. Sometimes we just need to agree to disagree, but by me listening to you and you listening to me, we can come up with another plan that neither one of us had thought of before. We need to learn to listen, and then listen to learn. Sometimes, this takes a lot of time and a lot of patience. We need to have respect and show respect for each other's values and feelings.

My first experience with Friends of the Teton River (FTR) got off to a rocky start, but, over the last few years, as I have visited with Amy and the FTR staff, I have come to know them well. I better understand their feelings and thoughts, and I think they better understand mine. I value our friendship.

Now, it is easy to have a serious and frank discussion. We respect each other, each other's values, and each other's feelings. We have learned to listen to each other. At the end of the day, we accomplish much more together than separately, and we all come away feeling good about our accomplishments.

It will take all of us working together, listening with understanding, and being respectful, to keep Teton Valley a beautiful place for all of us to live.

Sincerely,

Lynn Bagley

President of the Teton Soil Conservation District



FTR is working to find common ground with an ever-expanding group of collaborators, as we strive to keep working lands working; protect and restore stream flows and water quality in the Teton River and its tributaries, for the benefit of people, fish, and wildlife; and maintain a safe, affordable, and high quality water supply for municipalities and residential water users.

Photo credit: Chris Boyer @cfboyer.com



TSCD President Lynn Bagley and FTR Executive Director Amy Verbeten proudly presented a check to Pioneer Equipment this fall to finalize the purchase of a No-Till seed drill. The drill will be owned by the Teton Soil Conservation District, and rented to local farmers at a very low cost.

Teton Creek Corridor Project

Connecting our Community
with natural resources,
agricultural heritage, and recreational
opportunities

A Shared Success

On November 14, the Teton County Board of County Commissioners voted to approve the Teton Creek Pathway easements that extend along the creek corridor from State Line Road to the intersection with Cemetery Road near the Teton Creek Bridge. The county will hold the donated easements through private property, and has granted permission for the pathway to cross the old landfill property in order to connect 2.5 miles for public use.

Photo: Chris Boyer ©cfboyer.com

FAQ's

Who is this project for?

Everyone! This project is meant to be an asset for everyone in Teton Valley. This project will build a publicly available paved pathway adjacent to Teton Creek that can be used by the community and visitors.

Who made this project possible?

This project has relied on the joint efforts of willing landowners and various community organizations, including Friends of the Teton River, Teton Valley Trails and Pathways, Teton Regional Land Trust, Valley Advocates for Responsible Development, Teton County, the City of Driggs, the Community Foundation of Teton Valley, American Rivers, and the LOR Foundation.

When will we be able to use the pathway?

The nonprofit partners aim to break ground for the pathway in 2018. Once completed, public access will be allowed, but will be limited to the pathway. We will ask that you respect private property and natural areas.

Who will pay the costs?

Together, these nonprofit groups have paid for the land acquisitions and habitat restoration through private donations and grant funds. They will pay for pathway construction and some maintenance costs.

How will this benefit our community economically?

Studies have shown that pathways and trails increase nearby property values by 4-8 percent, resulting in increased tax revenues that can offset maintenance costs. Moreover, pathways like this attract visitors to Teton Valley, equating to more dollars spent at local businesses, making this a more vibrant place to live.

Why is FTR involved?

FTR has invested over a decade of work and \$3 million dollars to research, restore, protect, and improve fish habitat, stream flows, water quality, and riparian health in the Teton Creek corridor, with the majority of our work occurring from State Line to the Cemetery Road Bridge. As a project partner, FTR has been able to ensure the goals of the project align with our goals as an organization. We have also been able to leverage partner support to secure more funding for FTR's ongoing work on Teton Creek, including Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout research, stream flow restoration, and habitat restoration.

How will FTR continue to protect & improve this important resource?

Teton Creek is the most ecologically significant tributary in the upper Teton watershed. It has also been the most heavily impacted, and is a major conservation and restoration priority. FTR currently has \$400,000 in state, federal, and private funds for upcoming projects that restore healthy stream function, channel stability, water quality, riparian habitat, and connectivity to the Teton Creek corridor. This fall, FTR is conducting an assessment downstream of Cemetery Road Bridge in preparation for riparian and stream channel restoration work over the next two years.

How can I learn more or get involved?

Please visit tetoncreekcorridor.org or contact FTR or any of the other nonprofit organizations with logos at the bottom of the page. All of the nonprofit partners are interested in getting local citizens involved in the project. Please stay tuned for more updates and ways to help with this community project.



What are the overall goals of this project?

While a public pathway is a big part of this project, the overall goals are much broader than this. FTR's involvement is focused on improving stream function and fish and wildlife habitat, protecting Teton Valley's agricultural heritage, and providing an asset that benefits the entire community.

- » **Pathways and Public Access:** This project establishes a new 2.5-mile paved pathway from the Cemetery Road to Stateline Road along the Teton Creek corridor for non-motorized use. The pathway will be subject to a winter seasonal closure to protect critical winter range for big game species. The pathway will create a safe, family-friendly recreational opportunity easily accessible from Driggs, connecting local families to nature and providing economic benefits for the entire community.

- » **Agriculture:** The project will maintain productive farmlands along the Teton Creek corridor through conservation easements, protecting Teton Valley's agricultural heritage.
- » **Stream Habitat:** Stabilizes more than 5 miles of Teton Creek streambed, reducing flooding risk for private property and the City of Driggs, and improving stream function & habitat
- » **Riparian Habitat:** The project will improve and protect important wildlife habitat along Teton Creek.
- » **Community Development:** Project partners will work with interested landowners to improve existing developments, making them more compatible with community goals.



THIS PROJECT IS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY SUPPORT FROM THE LOR FOUNDATION

Success for Source Water!

FTR is excited to announce that Teton County has ratified the first ever, county-wide Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) in Idaho. Teton County's SWPP recognizes that a sustainable supply of clean drinking water is needed to support economic vitality and quality of life in our community. Developed by a diverse planning team and facilitated by FTR, the SWPP is a management plan designed to prevent contaminants from entering our drinking water supply and minimize potential problems, such as expanded drinking water monitoring requirements, additional water treatment requirements, increased health risks, and expensive environmental cleanup activities.

The SWPP recognizes that "public education and information is one of the primary protection tools appropriate for Teton County at this time." This way of thinking was also the inspiration for FTR's Teton County WaterWise Initiative, a community education program funded by the Environmental Protection Agency to engage citizens of all ages to participate in hands-on learning, community events, and stewardship activities focused on drinking water protection.

A central component of the WaterWise Initiative is a subgrants program that helps to fund community education projects focused on drinking water protection. Currently, Dan Romano at Teton High School is planning for a community nitrate testing event with his eleventh and twelfth grade chemistry classes, while Brad Street at Teton Middle School is developing a curriculum for the sixth grade Water Awareness Week in May. Future programs may include the development of educational materials related to the No-Till seed drill program by the Teton Soil Conservation District, and a free Household Hazardous Waste Collection event hosted by Teton Valley Community Recycling.

Does your school or organization have a project related to protecting clean drinking water in Teton County that FTR could help fund? If so, we would love to hear about it! Contact FTR's Education Program Coordinator, Shannon Brady, to learn more about the subgrants program: shannon@tetonwater.org or 208-354-3871 x 14.

CALL for PROPOSALS: Subgrants for Source Water

Does your school or organization have a project related to protecting clean drinking water in Teton County that FTR could help fund? If so, we would love to hear about it!

Contact FTR's Education Coordinator, Shannon Brady, to learn more about the subgrants program:
shannon@tetonwater.org
208-354-3871 x 14



Finding Common Ground

Protecting Common Ground

This summer, FTR and a group of nonprofit partners were able to collectively raise \$720,000 in public, private, and grant funds to purchase 80 acres adjacent to the Bates Bridge on the Teton River, thus securing its permanent protection and the future of this popular river access for the entire community. This effort responded urgently to a need that could only be accomplished by working together. *At left: The existing Bates boat ramp will be removed and restored with a new and improved public access point built in the spring.*

Cultivating Common Ground

In the past year, FTR and local agricultural producers have actively been cultivating common ground to develop effective, voluntary strategies for collaborative conservation on private land. We are proud to partner with local leaders in the farming/ranching industry, who believe that maintaining viable working lands and healthy watersheds go hand-in-hand (see pages 2-3).

Connecting Common Ground

On the surface, the Teton Creek corridor project (see pages 4-5) will create a literal connection via a 2.5 mile pathway. It has created other connections along the way, too. FTR has been able to ensure the goals of the project align with our goals as an organization. Together, we have developed a plan that conserves more of this important corridor, while supporting a vibrant local economy and our quality of life.

Dear Friends,

Teton Valley, Idaho, epitomizes the culture of the "New West"—blending agriculture and recreation, farming and fly fishing—with an economy and ecology that depend on sustaining healthy land and water. Over the past fifteen years, Friends of the Teton River has grown into a nationally recognized leader in watershed research, restoration, and collaboration. From the very beginning, FTR has relied on you, our friends and members, to support our work. We sincerely thank you for your contributions and hope you will renew your support as we look forward to the next fifteen years of service to our community and the Teton River.

In rural Idaho, it's rare for agricultural producers, agencies, officials, landowners, and conservation groups to work side by side to spearhead watershed protection efforts. FTR is working with the Teton Valley community to change that by finding "common ground" for water resource conservation. We are working together to develop place-based solutions that maintain the viability and health of our working lands, open spaces, and stream corridors, while improving surface and ground resources, reducing sediment input, and ensuring well-functioning fish and wildlife habitat. Water plays an essential role in the landscapes, lives, and livelihood of our community.

Finding Uncommon Solutions

FTR has found that collaborating to solve problems ultimately leads to win-win outcomes. By actively listening, asking questions, and finding common ground with diverse partners, we've been able to develop creative ways that address human needs and ecosystem function. FTR is changing the way that local stakeholders, national partners, and funders are approaching watershed conservation. We are striving to be the model that proves how uncommon partners can find unique solutions to the prevalent water issues we face together, as a community.

We can do more together.

By working together, we are able to forward innovative solutions that make sense for where we live, work, and play. FTR was founded by a group of individuals like you, who shared a commonly held belief that they could make a *real difference* in the health of their river and fishery. Through your year-end donation, you are helping us sustain healthy streams and a healthy community, long into the future.

With your support, we'll do it together.

Anna Lindstedt,
Development Director

**YOUR SUPPORT
MAKES A
DIFFERENCE!**

Please mail your year-end donation in the envelope provided. Big or small, your donation counts!

CONTACT US:

Friends of the Teton River
PO Box 768
Driggs, ID 83422
208.354.3871
donate by mail or online:
www.tetonwater.org

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Driggs, ID
Permit #8

Running Shuttle for a Teton River float,
photo by Anna Lindstedt.

2017 WaterWise Series

WaterWise is a 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. Watch for more information about the locations and times of these upcoming events at www.tetonwater.org and on our Facebook page.

February

Film Screening

Join us for a showing of Patagonia's latest short film *Unbroken Ground* that "explains the critical role food will play in the next frontier of our efforts to solve the environmental crisis." Learn how Teton Valley farmers and ranchers are taking the lead in restoring soil health for enhanced crop yields while also improving water resources.

March

Unmapped and Underwater: Understanding Floodplains

Do you need to worry about flooding? Is your property in a floodplain? Join us to learn about floods, floodplains, and how our community is working together to reduce flood risk.



2017 Fly Fishing Film Tour @
the Center for the Arts in Jackson, WY—
stay tuned for date, time, and ticket price.

April

FREE Well Water Testing

Is your water safe to drink? Drop by for FREE well water testing for nitrates, and learn more about well testing and drinking water protection. Afterward, we will host a panel discussion about water quality, in which we will discuss YOUR concerns about water quality—including whether our valley's water is safe to drink, what is being done to protect drinking water, and why some residents experienced water quality changes and even wells drying up this past summer.

May

FREE Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Time for spring cleaning! Grab that old paint and motor oil and bring it by the Household Hazardous Waste collection event. TVCR and RAD will haul it for free!

Water Awareness Week

During the first week of May, all of the valley's 6th graders spend a day in the field learning about the various aspects of the Teton River and its watershed to gain a greater appreciation for Idaho's most precious natural resource—water!

May 14 is Mother's Day! Check the local fishing report and get out there for the Mother's Day caddis hatch!