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The Friends of the Teton River is dedicated to understanding and improving ground and surface water resources in the Teton Basin, including the Teton River, its tributaries and wetlands. We will further this mission by conducting scientific research about the Teton watershed, effectively communicating this information to the public, and implementing on-the-ground improvement projects. In carrying out this mission we will actively cooperate and collaborate with all other groups, agencies and individuals working for the welfare of the Teton Basin.

WATER LINES

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY FRIENDS OF THE TETON RIVER



Over 140 supporters attended FTR's first public event, a membership drive.

Friends of the Teton River reports on a busy, successful first summer

By Lyn Benjamin
Executive Director

It has been a busy and exciting summer for all of us at FTR. Local and out-of-state response to a new watershed organization has far exceeded our expectations; I've come to realize anew that the Teton River lies very close to many people's hearts.

This year's drought has underscored in no uncertain terms how precious and vulnerable our water resources are. During the summer FTR has worked collaboratively with many different individuals and organizations, including local irrigators, guides and outfitters, conservation organizations, year-round and summer valley residents, local government officials, state and federal agencies, and natural resource professionals.

In this article I'll summarize the summer activities and in doing so offer many heartfelt thanks to those of you who have participated in and supported FTR. A separate article beginning on page 4 describes research and monitoring activities on the Teton River and its tributaries.

Members hip Drive. Our first public event of the year was a wonderful party (membership drive!) by the Teton River on June 30. Board member Katie Salsbury, her mom, Barbara Morey, and Suzie Work assembled a fabulous array of food and beverages. Kate West, Alan McKnight and Rico Young provided wonderful background music, and about 140 people enjoyed the evening. The Teton mountains, tributary canyons, alluvial valley and the river itself provided a perfect background for a brief presentation about the hydrology of the Teton Basin. This was obviously a must-repeat event.

Drought Forum. On July 26 about 60 people attended a public forum, co-hosted by FTR and the Teton Basin Subcommittee of the Henry's Fork Watershed Council, about the current drought situation. Six speakers gave presentations on topics ranging from reservoir operations to impacts on fish and wildlife populations. Mike Beus, hydrologist with the Bureau of Reclamation, summarized the hydrologic conditions and reservoir operations in the upper Snake River Basin. Dale Swenson, Executive Director of Fremont-Madison Irrigation

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- Student, \$5/year Family, \$50/year Benefactor, \$1,000/year
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Charge my: Visa Mastercard Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Members will receive voting privileges, quarterly newsletter, and regular activity updates.
Please send completed application form, with your check or credit card information, to:

FRIENDS OF THE TETON RIVER
PO Box 768 • Driggs, Idaho 83422

Summer Report -from page 1

District, explained how the irrigation district runs the water distribution network in Fremont and Madison counties and how water rights in Teton County are affected by downstream rights. John Winger, president of Trail Creek Sprinkler and Irrigation company, described how low water years affect irrigators in the Teton Valley and in particular at the south end of the valley. Bill Schrader, fishery biologist from Idaho Department of Fish and Game, discussed potential impacts on fish and wildlife populations. Dennis Dunn, Idaho Department of Water Resources, presented his perspective on groundwater resources in the Teton Valley and discussed concerns about limitations of the Teton Basin aquifer. Mark Trupp, Teton County Commissioner, announced Teton County's plan to fund a study of groundwater resources in the upper Teton Basin. The evening was very informative and the questions following the presentations generated an excellent discussion about a range of issues concerning local water resources.

Groundwater Study. Since last March, we have been working with the Teton County Commissioners to initiate a scientific study of groundwater resources in the Teton Basin. During the summer months we issued a request for proposals and received two responses. After an extensive review process, the Commissioners selected Cascade Earth Sciences to conduct the study. Teton County has agreed to contribute \$30,000 toward the study and will be seeking additional funding from local, state and federal sources. This is a very exciting and important step towards a better understanding of how our aquifer works. We hope that a model of the groundwater system will be completed within eighteen months.

Financial Affairs. The Henrys Fork Watershed Council gave a grant of \$4,575 towards Teton River water quantity and quality monitoring. We will be presenting results from this research at the State of the Watershed Conference in Rexburg Nov. 6. Many thanks to Carl Pergam and Dave Work for their efforts on the FTR fundraising committee during the summer months. Contributions to FTR through the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole's Old Bill's Fun Run have been incredible ... at last count \$11,685 has been donated and the count isn't yet complete. Thanks to all of you, you will be getting more personal thank yous when the process is complete. Another thank you goes to Rudd and Company, for their generous donation of expertise to FTR, and to Leora Wood, their bookkeeper, for her assistance.



USGS Geological Survey hydrologists install a stream-flow measurement weir on Six Springs Creek.

Student Stream Studies. Two Teton Valley fourth grade teachers, Sharon Gusa and Barb Agnew, have incorporated stream studies into their curricula this year with the assistance of FTR. The Driggs 4th graders will be studying Teton Creek, and Tetonia 4th graders will continue their work on Spring Creek. Many thanks to April Landale at the Teton Science School and Wyoming DEQ for their donations of equipment and assistance to these fledgling programs.

Collaborative Projects. Trout Unlimited and Friends of the Teton River will collaborate on two projects this fall. The two groups will "co-adopt a river," the Teton River from Fox Creek to the Bates Bridge, and will participate in an ESPN special on the Teton River. We are also working with the Teton Regional Land Trust and the Teton Basin Subcommittee of the Henrys Fork Watershed Council to design a science, restoration and land conservation project for potential funding from the Northwest Power Planning Council.

New Office. On Sept. 1 we moved into an office in the new brick building opposite Broulim's in downtown Driggs. Our office is upstairs in Suite #7. Our phone number is 208-354-3871 (FTR1) and our email address is FTR@tetotel.com. Stop by and visit! We will be hosting an open house later in the fall, dates and times will be announced in the newspaper. Our mailing address continues to be P.O. Box 768, Driggs, ID 83422.

Hope to see you all at our membership meeting Nov. 3 at 4pm at Teton High School in Driggs (see notice on page 7 for details).



Musicians Rico Young (left), Kate West and Alan McKnight entertained celebrants at the June 30 membership drive

What we studied

Between June and September 2001 Friends of the Teton River conducted monitoring of both water quantity and quality at eight sites on the Teton River, between the headwaters and Highway 33, three tributary streams and two spring creeks (see the last newsletter for details). In this article I will explain each of the tests that we ran and discuss the results.

Water quantity is the amount of water flowing past a certain point at a certain time. This quantity is measured in cubic feet (or cubic meters) per second and can best be visualized as the size of a box of water floating past you in one second. Hydrologists measure this amount by stretching a tape measure across a stream (or a cable for larger rivers) and dividing the channel into roughly twenty sections. We measure the depth and width of each section and multiply them together to get the area. We also measure the velocity in each section and multiply this value by the area to give cubic feet (or meters) per second, the flow. These twenty flows are added together to give a total flow for the whole stream.

We measured the flow at eight locations on the river to understand how discharge in the Teton River is determined by surface or groundwater inputs and thus affected by changes in the aquifer level or snowfall. Water quality (the chemistry of water) is intimately linked to water quantity in terms of dilution effects and ground versus surface water inputs.

We ran 13 different water quality tests to provide a detailed picture of temporal and spatial variability in water chemistry along the length of the river and in selected tributary streams. These are the parameters we looked at and brief descriptions of their biological significance:

Dissolved oxygen (DO) levels in water are important for all components of the aquatic ecosystem. Turbulence in streams mixes atmospheric oxygen with water, and photosynthesis of aquatic plants delivers oxygen to the water. Oxygen is more easily dissolved in cool than in warm water. In rivers, such as the Teton, with large amounts of aquatic plants, day-to-night variations in DO levels are strong due to plant consumption of oxygen at night and carbon dioxide during the day. DO levels can be reduced by the buildup of organic wastes, excessive algae and plants, and the consumption of oxygen by bacteria that break these things down.

pH is a measure of the number of hydrogen ions present and how acidic or alkaline the water is. Aquatic life needs pH values to be within a certain range.

Water temperature affects metabolic rates of aquatic organisms, the rate of photosynthesis of aquatic plants, the sensitivity of aquatic biota to foreign organisms, and the amount of oxygen that can be dissolved in the water. Aquatic organisms have adapted to survive within a range of temperature conditions. For example, trout and stonefly require cooler temperatures than carp and dragonfly nymphs.

Conductivity is a measure of the electrical conductance of water and an approximate predictor of the total number of dissolved ions. Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) is the sum of the concentrations of the major dissolved ions in the water. These values are affected by the geology of the watershed, a humid or arid climate and the chemical composition of the precipitation. Generally TDS values for groundwater are higher and less variable than surface water.

Monitoring water quantity on the

By Lyn Benjamin, Hydro

Sediment in the water column is measured by total suspended sediment (TSS) and less directly by turbidity, which is a measure of the light scattered and absorbed by particles in the water column. Excess sediment in a stream can reduce insect habitat and consequently species richness. Trout reproduction can be adversely affected by reduction of oxygen in gravel that has been filled by fine sediment, and salmonids may experience depressed growth rates, reduced respiration, and reduced tolerance to disease in highly turbid waters.

Phosphorous and nitrogen are the two nutrients that were measured. These are found in several different forms including phosphates, nitrates, nitrite and ammonia. Excessive amounts of nutrients may diminish water quality through the process of eutrophication whereby aquatic plant growth is overstimulated. The decomposition of plants and algae consumes more dissolved oxygen than is replenished by other processes thus reducing oxygen levels in the stream. The primary sources of nitrogen input to the Teton Basin include cattle manure, fertilizer, legume crops, precipitation and domestic septic systems.

E. coli bacteria levels were also measured. This bacteria comes from human and animal wastes.

Water quality & the Teton River

logist & Executive Director

What we learned

WATER QUANTITY

As most of you know, conditions this summer have been the driest that we have on record. The summer wasn't the single driest or hottest, but, cumulatively, since the summer of 2000, conditions have been the driest that we have seen in 30 years. This was reflected in river levels throughout the summer: we had one day of peak runoff in the spring that was driven by rain; snowmelt runoff was drawn out and small due to a small snowpack; throughout the summer river levels were about a third of the 30 year mean values.

Currently, baseflow in the river is a little over one-third of the 30 year mean. If you want to look at daily flow levels in the Teton River at Packsaddle Bridge you can find them on the web at www.usgs.gov, follow links to real time water data.

FTR measured the river at eight different sites four times over the

summer months. The greatest inflows to the river occur between White Bridge and South Bates Bridge. As the summer progressed these inputs were increasingly derived from groundwater.

WATER QUALITY

The average values for each of the water quality tests at each site, May through August, are summarized in the table below. I will discuss these results in relationship to Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) established standards for aquatic life.

Dissolved Oxygen levels were above the minimum DEQ standard of 6 mg/l at all times indicated that oxygen levels are not a problem in the Teton River. Strongly diel (daily) variations in DO levels were seen with lowest levels early in the morning due to nighttime plant consumption of oxygen. Plant respiration and photosynthesis appeared to have more of an effect on DO levels than water temperatures.

Temperatures in the river never exceeded the DEQ standard of 22° C (71.6° F). The highest temperature that we recorded was 20° C (68° F), above Rainier Campground at 2pm on July 31.

Turbidity & Total Suspended Sediment levels were both reasonably

Nitrate/Nitrite levels ranged from 0.98 to 1.90 mg/l in the Teton River and 3.74 mg/l at Six Springs.

- Levels above 0.3 mg/l may cause nuisance plant growth
- Levels above 2.3 and 4.5 mg/l may cause mortality for rainbow and cutthroat fry respectively

low. DEQ has only established turbidity standards, not total suspended sediment standards.

Ammonia levels were consistently below established standards.

pH values were all slightly alkaline reflecting the fact that most of the snowmelt water in the Teton Basin flows through a limestone aquifer.

Total Dissolved Solids & Conductivity were both relatively high reflecting a high proportion of groundwater in the river water.

All phosphate levels were very low.

Nitrate plus Nitrite concentrations were highest in the upper portion of the river and decreased downstream. Statistical analysis shows that the relationship between discharge and

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AVERAGE VALUES FOR EACH WATER QUALITY TEST AT EACH SITE

SITE	Dissolved Oxygen (mg/l)	Temperature ° C (° F)	Turbidity (NTU)	Conductivity (micromho)	pH	Nitrate + Nitrite (mg/l)	Total Suspended Solids (mg/l)	Total Dissolved Solids (mg/l)	E. coli (organisms/100 ml)
Teton River Ranch	7.5	10.0 (50)	8.03	296.67	7.99	1.73	22.75	194.00	238.00
White Bridge	8.8	11.2 (52)	9.19	291.33	8.14	1.49	20.75	248.50	180.00
Teton Valley Lodge	7.6	16.3 (61)	10.04	286.67	8.43	1.31	8.25	221.00	192.00
South Bates Bridge	11.5	17.2 (63)	12.76	287.33	8.47	1.33	5.25	179.50	128.67
Bates Bridge	12.3	16.3 (61)	12.93	281.67	8.37	1.22	11.50	163.50	137.33
Above Rainier	9.1	18.5 (65)	12.27	275.00	8.52	1.22	6.00	213.00	81.00
Packsaddle	9.9	18.8 (66)	12.63	286.67	8.67	1.19	14.33	224.00	56.00
Highway 33	9.7	14.3 (58)	11.65	260.00	8.49	1.05	6.33	213.50	82.00



Quantity & Quality

-from page 5

nitrate concentration is significant, indicating that the higher the discharge the lower the concentration of nitrate/nitrite. As the summer progressed and groundwater increasingly provided the stream flow in the river, the discharge/concentration relationship weakened, indicating that surface water dilutes nitrate concentrations more than groundwater and that groundwater contains higher levels of nitrate/nitrite than does surface water.

Nitrate plus nitrite levels in the Teton River ranged from 1.0 at Highway 33 to 1.9 at the headwaters.

No standards have been established by EPA or DEQ for nitrate levels in surface waters. In the literature I was able to find two assessments of critical nitrate levels for aquatic life. The first is 0.3 mg/l above which nuisance plant growth will occur. (M.G. Rupert. 1996. Major sources of nitrogen input and loss in the upper Snake River Basin, Idaho and western Wyoming. USGS Water Resources Investigations Report 96-4008.) The second level is 2.3 and 4.5 mg/l where 46% of mortality occurs for rainbow and cutthroat fry respectively. (J.W. Kinchloe, Wedemyer, G.A. and D.L. Koch. 1979. Tolerance of Developing salmonid eggs and fry to nitrate exposure. Bulletin of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology 23:575-578).

E. coli levels were quite high, ranging from 128 to 326 between the headwaters and S. Bates bridge on Aug. 29. The DEQ standard for recreational use is single sample of 406 E.coli organisms/100 ml and a mean value 126 organisms/100 ml based on a minimum of 5 samples over 30 days. FTR will be following up on these results by taking five water samples for E.coli analysis over the next month. The source(s) of the bacteria is unknown.

TRIBUTARY DATA

We also ran water quality tests in Fox, Darby, and Teton Creeks in the National Forest above all diversions and at Six Springs and Fish Creek springs on the east side of the river. We installed two measurement weirs on Fish Creek and Six Springs to better understand how flow from the east side springs is affected by runoff vs. irrigation returns.

We found that E.coli and nitrate/nitrite levels in Fox, Darby and Teton Creeks were extremely low. In contrast the levels in the springs were higher, especially Six Springs which had the highest nitrate/nitrite levels (3.74 mg/l) in the valley (possibly due to up-gradient fertilization). The springs were less alkaline than the surface water streams indicating possible buffering in the aquifer or recharge outside the limestone aquifer. Spring water had higher conductivity and TDS than surface water streams, as would be expected of ground versus surface water.

At the end of August, E. coli levels ranged from 128-326 in the Teton River above Bates Bridge.

DEQ maximum permissible levels for single samples is 406 organisms/100 ml and for multiple (5) samples 126 organisms/100ml

FUTURE PLANS

In order to obtain a whole year of data we will be continuing the monitoring program in the fall and winter with collections planned for October, December, February, and April. If you would like to assist with collections we'd love to have your help. This summer the help provided by volunteers Sam Pole, Leslie Prendergast, Dave Work, and Eliot Traher was invaluable. Thank you all.

I would also like to thank the Henrys Fork Watershed Council for their grant of \$4,575. We will be presenting the results of the current year's research at the State of the Watershed Conference Nov. 6 in Rexburg. Thanks to Sheryl Hill and Troy Saffle, IDEQ, for their generous assistance with sampling equipment and patient guidance through water quality protocols. Chris Fischer from Idaho Association Soil Conservation Districts provided excellent training in water sampling pro-

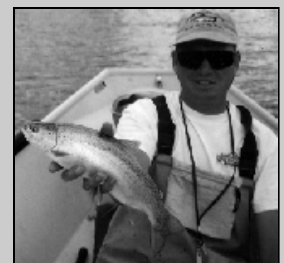
GUIDE'S CORNER

After this summer's record low flows and high water temperatures, fishing conditions will be improving on the Teton River. As the weather cools so will the water, bringing more hatches and more active fish! With temperatures trending down, better fishing will soon be during the heat of the day. Cloudy days are a real bonus because this is when Gray Drakes, Mahogany Duns and Blue Wing Olives are most prolific. However, hatches have been much more spotty over the last

several years and aquatic insect life is way down since the flood of 1997. Look for most fish in the deeper, slower water where they sought refuge from this summer's drought and where they will also spend the winter.

Plan on wading at the many public accesses as the river is too low for most boats.

-By Tom Fenger



November 3 • 4 pm • Teton High School

Notice of Annual Meeting of Members

At this first meeting, the Members will vote to re-elect or elect four Directors. Pursuant to the FTR corporate bylaws, four of the nine current Directors are standing for re-election. They are Lyle Kunz, Tom Fenger, Sam Pole, and David Work.

Lyle Kunz is a long-time resident of the Valley and has been guiding on and fishing the Teton River for some fifty years. Tom Fenger is one of the head guides at Teton Valley Lodge, and has been guiding on the Teton and other local rivers for 23 years. He holds a Bachelor of Sciences degree in Environmental Studies from Utah State University. Sam Pole is a geologist and has worked with the INEEL in waste management. David Work is a retired geologist and avid flyfisherman who brings a great deal of enthusiasm to FTR.

The Board highly recommends re-election of Lyle, Tom, Sam, and David; however, Members can vote for any new individual they believe is qualified through write-ins on the ballot.

At the meeting, the Members may also bring before the Board any issues they think need to be addressed. For example, the next FTR event scheduled after this meeting is the water quality forum planned for mid-January (see article on next page), and we would welcome ideas for subjects that should be addressed.

Please let us know if you would be interested in serving on the board in future years.

All Members of record as of October 1 and 18 years or older are entitled to vote for Directors. Votes may be cast (1) in person, (2) by a proxy appointed using the proxy form attached to the ballot, or (3) by mailed ballot. All mailed ballots must be received no later than Nov. 2 at P.O. Box 768, Driggs 83422. Only one representative of a family or corporate membership may vote.

A list of Members will be available to any Member at the FTR offices at 65 S. Main St., Suite 7, Driggs.

We hope you will attend to cast your vote in person and engage the Board in discussion.

Your participation is important!

BALLOT

Annual Meeting of Members of Friends of the Teton River, Inc. November 3, 2001

I, [please print] _____, vote as a Member/proxy of a Member/representative of the family of/entity of _____ [strike out the ones that do not apply] for the following individuals to serve as members of the Board of Directors of Friends of the Teton River, Inc. I hereby affirm that I am 18 years old or older.

Place your initials to the right of each typed name, or write in the name of the person you are voting for on the blank lines and place your initials next to the new name.

- Lyle Kunz
- Tom Fenger
- Sam Pole
- David Work

(Signature)

PROXY APPOINTMENT

I, [please print] _____, hereby appoint _____ to vote as [my] proxy [for the _____ family/corporation] at the annual meeting.

(Signature of Member)

FTR planning mid-January Water Quality Forum

By Bill Kelly
FTR Board Member

At the July public forum on water quantity at Teton High School, a number of people indicated they were just as concerned about water quality issues as about water quantity. Should they be testing their well water? How many septic systems can be installed how close together and how close to wells before posing risks to drinking water? Should more of the Valley hook up to the sewer system, and should it be expanded or upgraded? What about stories of E. coli being detected in local water? Where are the bacteria coming from and are they a health risk?

While many people seem concerned with the quality of their well water, surface water quality is also an issue. The Valley's surface water supports our fisheries and a wide variety of avian and other wildlife species.

One of the factors that initially prompted formation of FTR was recent findings of elevated nitrate levels in the upper Teton River. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and EPA have designated the upper Teton River and a number of its tributaries as waters that are "impaired" due to factors such as nutrients (e.g., nitrates), sediment, tem-

perature, and flow and habitat alterations. The federal Clean Water Act mandates that water quality standards be set for these impaired waterways. This is now being done through establishment of TMDLs (total maximum daily loads).

EPA has also recently been engaged in its Source Water Assessment and Protection Program covering public drinking water systems in the Valley. A significant number of people obtain their water from systems managed by Victor, Driggs, and Teton.

Are Federal and State regulations and management practices, and local planning and zoning ordinances, procedures, and management practices, sufficient to protect our water quality? If not, what needs to be done?

Over the summer, FTR has been engaged in its first season of monitoring both water quantity and water quality on the Teton River and a number of its tributary creeks and springs (see article on page 4). This has been done with significant assistance from Idaho DEQ, among others, in recognition that government agencies need solid, specific, local data to supplement their efforts. Results from this monitoring will be presented and discussed at the January water quality forum.

FTR was organized to be a community-based membership organization, with a commitment to work with other local organizations, government officials and individual citizens. At the upcoming water quality forum, we intend to have presentations and discussion on all of the above matters, and we want your input on these and any other issues that should be addressed, individuals or entities that should make presentations, and any pertinent information you can supply.

For example: •Have you or others had your well water tested, and what did you find? •Do you have water quality concerns that are not mentioned above, such as sources of hazardous chemicals? •Do you know of studies or data that might be overlooked? •Do you know of individuals or entities with specialized knowledge whom we should try to get involved?

We encourage your participation whether you are an FTR Member or not (but please become a member, so you can have more of an impact!). You can visit us at our new offices in the new building opposite Broulins, write to us, email us at FTR@tetontel.com, or phone us at 354-FTR1 (354-3871).

We hope you to see you at the forum!

Friends of the Teton River

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Dedicated to understanding and improving the water resources of Teton Basin.

