

WATER LINES

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY FRIENDS OF THE TETON RIVER Vol. 7 No. 1 SPRING 2007



Photo by Chris Evenstad

Working together for clean water, healthy streams and abundant fisheries.

Clean Water

In December 2006, the Teton County Commissioners passed the long-awaited Groundwater Protection Ordinance. For the first time, in April 2007, a new subdivision was required to complete a Nutrient Pathogen study as a condition of preliminary plat approval.

Healthy Streams

FTR has raised a total of \$320,000 for restoration work and comprehensive planning on Teton Creek.

see more details on each of these stories on page 2

Abundant Fisheries

FTR's **Open Channels** program continues to improve irrigation diversions and remove fish barriers, restore streambanks and rewater tributary streams in order to recover our native Yellowstone cutthroat trout and create a balanced fishery.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LYN BENJAMIN

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As we work together for clean water, healthy streams and abundant fisheries, Friends of the Teton River continues to bring our community together to protect Teton Valley's precious water resources. Please celebrate our beautiful streams and river at our summer party. Come and get wet and muddy as we restore streambanks. Join your neighbors at roundtables where we'll discuss water policy. The FTR office is filled with energy and excitement and *we always welcome your visits and comments.*

Let me fill you in on how we've been working for clean water, healthy streams and abundant fisheries.

Clean Water

We believe that groundwater monitoring and protection is one of the most important ways we serve our community. It took several years of hard work to pass Teton County's **Groundwater Protection Ordinance** in December 2006. Using a Nutrient Pathogen model, the ordinance provides a vital tool to assess the impact of new subdivisions on water quality. Under the ordinance, if certain conditions exist on a site, a Level 1 **Nutrient Pathogen** (NP) study must be completed to model the amount of pollution that will be added to groundwater by the proposed number of houses in the subdivision. If an unacceptable amount of pollutants would be generated by the proposed number of houses, then the developer will need to reduce lots or provide an advanced sewage treatment method. In April, the Teton County Planning and Zoning Commissioners in a 6 to 1 vote required the Ranch subdivision, located close to the Teton River, to complete an NP study as part of preliminary plat approval. We hope that precedence has been set for the protection of our groundwater.

Healthy Streams

Over the past two years, in response to FTR's successes in working with the local community, the **Natural Resources Conservation Service** has dedicated a significant proportion of its Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds to stream restoration projects in Teton Valley. At this time, FTR is working with 14 different landowners on Trail, Teton, S. Leigh and Fox Creeks and on the Teton River to implement stream restoration and fish passage projects funded through the WHIP program. Additionally, FTR has partnered



with the City of Victor and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore streambanks on Trail Creek. We have our largest fish passage and restoration project ever slated this summer for **Badger Creek**, where we will replace a dilapidated irrigation diversion and install fish screens. Finally, the **Teton Creek Subwatershed Committee** continues to hold monthly roundtable meetings and has some great results to report. We presented a proposal for Teton Creek restoration to the Upper Snake Basin Advisory group in early April. The project was ranked second in the region, and as such will receive \$144,000 towards restoration work in 2008. We have also received \$45,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for Teton Creek restoration. FTR is using this commitment to leverage other funds to start the restoration work. We'd like to extend sincere thanks to Fran McKibbon and Flyod Hill for their leadership on Teton Creek. We held a very successful two-day restoration workshop in November that was attended by 25 people from throughout the Intermountain West. We are also working with the Utah State University landscape architecture department, which will use two graduate-level classes to research and produce a **Teton Creek Comprehensive Plan** by May 2008. Spencer Thurnell and Land Equity Partners have committed \$15,000 to pay for this plan. Many thanks for their generosity.

Abundant Fisheries

FTR continues to work closely with federal and state agencies to develop and implement native trout recovery plans. FTR's **Open Channels** program is widely endorsed by all of our partners. Many thanks to **John Short** for his continued support of this program. We are currently working with landowners interested in placing their water rights in the Idaho Water Bank to rewater tributary streams.

Lyn Benjamin

JOIN US IN EXPLORING OUR WATERSHED!

We have some wonderful watershed activities for you to participate in this summer; come and walk, float, collect aquatic bugs and plant willows with us this summer! Learn about Teton Valley's streams and get a new perspective on our water resources.

Call us for more information about any of these events.

June 2

Teton River Cleanup with Silverstar Communications. Meet at Driggs City Park at 8 AM for float and clean-up assignments. Please arrange to bring your own boat.

June 14

Stream Restoration in Teton Valley. Driggs Community Center, 7 PM. Mike Lien, FTR's Restoration Director, will give a virtual guided tour of stream restoration projects that FTR has completed in the past six years. Come and learn how you can improve your stream habitat, decrease streambank erosion and enjoy the beautiful riparian areas in our valley.

June 23

Our favorite Big Hole Wildflower Hike. See the wildflowers of early summer and get a view of the southern headwaters of the Teton River with FTR's new Education Director, Amy Verbeten.

July 7

FTR hosts its **Annual River Celebration and Adventure Auction, with music by Ben Winship and Margo Valiante!** Join us for a fun-filled evening and dinner by the Teton River. Call 354-3871 for advance tickets or directions.

July 26 and 27

Teton River Watershed Curriculum training for teachers and other educators. FTR will provide classroom and field training to all those who would like to teach more field-based lessons and explore the world of streams with their students. Free copies of the K-12 curriculum will be made available to all participants.

July 30

Teton River Full Moon Float. Our famous float down the Teton River from Rainey to Packsaddle. Enjoy a community potluck dinner at 6 PM at Rainey and then float down the river as the full moon rises. Please arrange to bring your own boat or float with a friend!

August 10

Eastside Teton Watershed Hike. Hike in the north end of Teton Valley and visit a new part of the watershed with Amy Verbeten.

August 28

Welcome the changing season with our final Full Moon Float. Call FTR for details on this one!

September 8

Old Bill's Fun Run. Celebrate the work of all of the region's non-profit organizations!



Sabra Steele and John Rice enjoy a hike in the Tetons.



Join Ben Winship and Margo Valiante July 7th at the Annual FTR River Celebration

We are in the process of updating our database and will be sending out more email communications about FTR activities.

We'd like to include you in our email list. Please send your current email address to jill@tetonwater.org, so we can keep you informed about our upcoming events.

*Thanks much,
Jill Hansen*

A CONVERSATION WITH VERL BAGLEY

Numerous articles have been written about Verl Bagley in the past few years. As newcomers to the Valley find their sense of place in a quickly changing landscape, the stories of “the way things were” are increasingly important to understand. Verl, who will be 91 in August, recounts stories of days gone by with humor and detailed description. We had the chance to talk a little bit With Verl about Teton Valley, its water resources and some of the changes taking place.

Tell me a little about the days you were the watermaster down on Trail Creek.

It was 1971 through 1978. We went on a mission in 1984. Then, when I came back, I was the watermaster for five more years. So it was 12 years.

Were those good water years?

Pretty good. I know one of those Junes, it rained every day. I remember it well, 'cause I started up Game Creek and there's a fence that crosses the road there...and I said, “Someone's lost a lot of junk up in that mud hole.” And I pulled up [in my car] and went to stop and that “junk” got up and ran up the hill. It was a big brown bear.

Did you know all the users on the canal at that point?

The good ones and the bad ones.

What do you mean?

I told one guy I knew down there that if the Teton Dam broke and spread out across his field, he wouldn't have been satisfied. And that's a fact. [*chuckling*].

So there weren't as many subdivisions back then?

The subdivisions started in about 1956. My wife used to work in the [Driggs] courthouse and she put the first one on record.

The valley has changed a lot in the last five to ten years hasn't it?

This little valley was settled by Mormon families and a few others. There's so much more stuff going on now. There isn't a week that goes by that there isn't someone written up in the newspaper for driving too fast.

You are very connected with water.

You mean water witching? [*Interviewer's note: Water witching is a divining practice, where the “water witcher” uses a metal rod or a willow twitch to find water underground.*]

Yes, why do you think that is? Is water witching a gift?

Yeah, it's a gift.

How did you find out about this gift?

I was helping a fellow drill a well, and he could do it and he showed me how. Then I went over to my house—we was livin' in a cabin then, getting ready to build a house—and I went over and witched my well and drove a sand point down to the water and got it going. It was only 14 feet deep.

That's amazing.

It's been going ever since 1940. Well drillers don't like me and I about quit [water witching] because I got a bad name. If I said “drill it here,” they'd drill it over there. And then he'd be drilling down 100 feet or 200 feet. And then what does that mean? \$32 dollars a foot for the well driller!

Has the value of water changed?

Yes, it's gone up. Ranchers have all gone into subdivisions now and everyone wants their water. When I first started [farming] we had 7,200 acres. We had hay, grain and some potatoes. I remember when I used to stack it all by hand. I was a professional hay stacker. And I mean professional. [*chuckles*]

Do you fish anymore?

A little. It's difficult for me to get around these days. I know this hole down there on the [Teton] river where I can catch fish 18-19 inches. Mostly brookies. Now they're good eatin'.

I've never eaten a whitefish. Are they good eatin'?

People used to go over to Jackson to get 'em. They used to seine a lot down there; and you could go there and get half a sack [of whitefish]. We'd get them and smoke em'. Whitefish are really good smoked. I also used to cast a little. And we used to use flies. We could get 25 fish on a fly in one day. Now I just let the grandkids fish.



Verl Bagley demonstrates water witching, a process that uses a metal rod or willow twitch to find water underground.



How is irrigation water distributed in Teton Valley?

Many of you have asked us who is responsible for water distribution in Teton Valley. Who decides when water is or isn't available for irrigation, fire ponds or fish and wildlife? What happens during the irrigation season when the oldest priority dates are held by irrigators downstream from Teton Valley? What role does FTR play in this process? Here is a brief summary of the roles and responsibilities that Water District #1, Denny Thomas, watermaster, and FTR play in this process. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Water District #1 is responsible for measurement and regulation of all pump and canal diversions from the Snake River and its tributaries downstream to Milner Dam near Twin Falls. These responsibilities include:

- Measure, account, and distribute natural-flow and storage water to those entitled to its use within the water district boundaries under Idaho law.
- Compute the natural -flow on a regular basis, publish effective priority dates, and distribute natural-flow water to earliest water rights currently diverting water.
- Measure and account for natural flow and storage diverted by each canal. (Note: Any amount of water diverted in excess of the canal's natural-flow entitlement shall be charged as storage, excepting a "futile call" situation.)
- The watermaster (or his deputies) shall close any diversion exceeding its natural-flow entitlement and/or storage allocation or rental.
- Costs of distributing and measuring water within Water District #1 are the responsibility of the district and are apportioned among water users.

In Upper Teton Basin responsibilities for distribution are shared in the following way:

- **Water District #1 Office** – Provides general water-rights information to the public. Also provides Upper Teton deputy watermaster with water-right listings and oversees regulation by the deputy watermaster and measurement by the hydrographer.
- **Fremont-Madison Irrigation District Office** – Provides storage water and storage rental to water users within its irrigation district boundaries when it is available.
- **Denny Thomas, Deputy watermaster** – Regulates diversions based on available natural flow, water-right priorities, water-right amounts and storage availability.
- **Friends of the Teton River, Hydrographer and Gauge Reader** – Collects daily gauge readings, measures streamflows and diversion discharges, and provides deputy watermaster with hydrologic information necessary to regulate diversions.

Water users or canal companies are responsible for:

- Organizing and appointing a canal manager in charge of distributing water to all users within the area served by the canal.
- Distributing water and cost assessments within the canal system.
- Installing and maintaining measuring devices in close proximity to their diversion works.
- Installation of headgates or similar control devices that may be set and locked by the Water District #1 watermaster or his deputy.
- Costs of installation and maintenance of measurement and controlling structures.
- Managing natural-flow and storage supplies. It is the responsibility of the canal or water user to keep informed of the effective priority dates published by the water district and the daily amounts of storage diverted by the canal.

If you'd like more information about water distribution, contact:

Water District #1
www.waterdistrict1.com
– for information regarding current priorities delivered during the irrigation season.

Idaho Department of
Water Resources
www.idwr.idaho.gov
– for all water resource-related information.

Idaho Department of
Water Resources / Water
District #1 Office in Idaho
Falls (525-7172)
– for information regarding water rights, measurement, or regulation responsibilities.

Fremont-Madison
Irrigation District in St.
Anthony (624-3381)
– for information regarding storage allocations and rentals.

Friends of the Teton River
in Driggs (354-3871)
www.tetonwater.org
– for specific measurement information or requests in the Upper Teton Basin.

Denny Thomas in Teton
(456-2381)
– for "in the field" water regulation questions on streams within Upper Teton Basin.

WELCOME AMY!

Our new Education and Outreach Director, Amy Verbeten



I feel so fortunate to have been invited to join Friends of the Teton River in the role of Education and Outreach Director! A native of the Intermountain West, I fell in love with Teton Valley during my first visit to Grand Targhee on a high school ski trip, and have dreamed of calling the area home since working for the NOLS Teton Valley branch in the summers of 2003 and 2004.

Although it will be bittersweet to leave the Eagle River Valley of Colorado, my husband Dan and I are eagerly anticipating our move north at the end of May. We are looking forward to meeting new people, exploring the place we hope to call home for many years to come, and beginning to discover our own special places within the valley.

I know that I have big shoes to fill in this position, and will work hard to maintain the relationships and level of educational excellence Anna Lindstedt has established. I have had the opportunity in the past several months to learn a good bit about the current educational programs at FTR, and know that I will learn far more when I actually arrive in Driggs. As I begin to think about influencing the goals and direction these programs, it is of utmost importance that I do so with a thorough understanding of the evolving needs, opportunities, logistical constraints, and values of the Teton Valley community. I intend to ask a lot of questions—and then carefully listen to the answers—during my first months of tenure.

I hope to meet many of you at the exciting community outreach events planned for this summer. As we share time together on a wildflower walk, a watershed hike, a restoration or service day, a full moon float, or at the Annual River Celebration and Auction, I invite you to share feedback about how well the outreach events and adult programs offered by FTR currently serve the commu-

nity. I look forward to hearing your ideas about whether there are specific populations within the community who would benefit from targeted educational offerings. Are there ways we can better share scientific findings with the general public to promote a better understanding of the Teton Watershed? Do you know of a local business or community organization with which we should explore additional opportunities for educational partnerships? Would you, or someone you know, be interested in expanded offerings of for-credit adult education programs or college internship programs? Do we need to expand community awareness of FTR programs through increased marketing and a diversity of programmatic offerings?

I am also excited to become part of the community of professional educators in the valley. I hope to meet many local teachers at FTR's curriculum training workshop in July, and will make personal contacts during teacher training and the early part of the school year. As a former classroom teacher, I understand the challenges of creating science lessons that are interesting and meaningful to students and that correlate with school, district, and state standards and expectations. It is my hope that, through collaboration between members of the community, Teton Valley teachers, administrators and students, and FTR, Teton Valley will become known as a leader in offering effective, engaging, place-based science in its schools.

I truly look forward to meeting you, and sincerely hope that you will take the opportunity to share your thoughts, concerns, and ideas with me so that educational programs at FTR will continue to grow in a manner that is most useful to the people they serve.

Kind Regards,

Amy Verbeten

Amy Verbeten will join the FTR staff in the early summer of 2007. She holds a bachelor of science degree in biology, with a minor in geology, from the University of Washington, a master of arts degree in education from Prescott College, and a Colorado State teaching license with an endorsement in secondary science. Amy has been fortunate to combine her passion for education with her love for the outdoors, teaching hands-on science indoors and out since 1994. As the Youth Programs Director for the Gore Range Natural Science School, Amy mentors graduate students in natural science education, and works with classroom teachers to develop standards-based natural science curricula.

EDUCATION UPDATE

Making Art out of Science

This winter, K-12 classrooms created posters of what they learned about their watershed the previous fall. Before the snow fell, students from Driggs Elementary, Teton High School, The Learning Academy and Teton Valley Community School collected data on the ponds and streams of Blackfoot Farms, just west of Driggs.



The students worked together on interpretive posters that explain what they learned about water quality, macroinvertebrates, soils and riparian wildlife. Thanks to an EPA Education Grant, these posters will be printed with weather resistant ink on metal signs, and hung for display at the Friends of the Teton River office, Huntsman Springs, and their respective schools. Also, a special thank you to local graphic designer, Bjorn Borstelman, who helped digitize, format and get the signs ready for press. Please stop by our office to see the completed versions of the signs shown to the right.

Above: Local kids help with planting at Huntsman Springs.

Right: Signs from local students that can be seen at the FTR office or Huntsman Springs.



story and drawing by
Meghan Hanson Powers,
Plan One Architects

Importance of Water Efficiency in a Growing Community

Meghan Hanson Powers is a LEED Accredited Professional currently pursuing her Architectural license. Originally from Montana's Bitterroot Valley, she received a Master of Architecture degree from Montana State University in Bozeman in 2002. She has lived in Teton County, Idaho, for the past four years, while serving as an architectural intern for a prominent Jackson design firm. Meghan has recently begun a new position with the Driggs office of Plan One/Architects, and looks forward to contributing directly to the green architecture movement of the valley. She lives in a strawbale and recycled materials house she and her husband, Aaron, built near Fox Creek.



In reaction to development nationwide, communities are seeing the need to address water issues as they relate to growth. Sprawling growth can cause degradation of water quality in rivers, streams, and groundwater. According to the Smart Growth for Clean Waters Report, nearly 45% of water bodies in the United States remain polluted. As Luna Leopold, the former Chief Hydrologist for the U.S. Geological Survey stated, "The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land." The need to reduce source pollutants, control storm water, and improve overall water quality has become imperative.

One tool currently being used to aid the building community in water conservation is the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. LEED provides a framework for high performance building through increased efficiencies, reduced materials use, and healthy building standards. The LEED program awards "credits" for implementing environmentally friendly designs. LEED addresses three areas specific to water efficiency: **1) landscaping, 2) wastewater, and 3) potable water use.**

LEED Water Efficiency Credit 1 addresses water use on a site scale. The goal is to reduce potable water consumption for irrigation by at least 50%. This may include planting native species that do not require excess water, installing efficient irrigation systems, and using captured rainwater or recycled greywater to irrigate lawns and gardens.

Water Efficiency Credit 2 seeks to reduce the amount of wastewater generated and the amount of potable water contributed to sewage by at least 50%. This credit applies to both individual home sites and subdivisions. There are a number of ways to achieve this, the most obvious being the use of high-efficiency fixtures, such as low-flow toilets, dual-flush toilets, and waterless or composting systems.

In addition, re-using storm water or greywater ("greywater" is everything but toilet water, including water from sinks, showers, and washing machines) can reduce overall water consumption. Creating on-site wastewater treatment areas of constructed wetlands or leach fields can mimic natural water filtration

"The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land."

STAFF NEWS AT FTR

A huge welcome to **Jill Hansen**, FTR's new Office Manager and Marketing Specialist!

Jill joined FTR in April 2007. She brings a wealth of experience from her previous life as a marketing executive and motel owner in Silicon Valley and South Lake Tahoe, California. Jill will be keeping the public informed about FTR's work through our website and newsletter and the local media. She is also responsible for keeping the FTR office organized amidst all the activities that we are involved in!



Jill was born in Iowa and has lived in California for most of her life. She traveled through Idaho on her way to Yellowstone and the Tetons and fell in love with the country and wildlife. In her words: "Small-town girl, gone big city and then made it back—full circle. Friends of the Teton River are doing very important work here, and I am pleased to do what I can to help them with their mission."

A change of hats for **Anna Lindstedt**

After working for three and half years as FTR's Education and Outreach Director, Anna has decided to expand her experience and take on the role of Development Director. We are all thrilled that Anna will be working with FTR in a new capacity; we believe that her understanding of, and commitment to, Teton Valley's precious water resources will be invaluable in her new role. Additionally, Clare Payne Simmons, former Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, will be shar-

ing some of her experience and skills with Anna. You'll be hearing more from Anna as soon as she gets back from a well-earned vacation fly-fishing in Belize!



[continued from previous page](#)

and can be scaled to serve home or community use.

Water Efficiency Credit 3 maximizes water efficiency within buildings. Fixtures such as toilets, urinals, lavatory faucets, showers, and kitchen sinks contribute greatly to water use. By installing low-flow and high-efficiency fixtures, water use can be significantly reduced.

What can you do to *increase* your water efficiency and *decrease* your water use? Many water conservation strategies require little or no additional cost. Install low-flow

fixtures, native landscaping and efficient irrigation systems. Other measures, such as rainwater collection and greywater re-use, involve a higher level of initial investment. Look at all the strategies from a "life-cycle analysis." This means there are often associated reductions in maintenance costs and environmental degradation in the long run.

With the current level of growth in Teton County, it is important that the building industry educate itself about water use. Further information on LEED and Water Efficiency in buildings can be found at the websites listed to the right.

United States Green
Building Council:
www.usgbc.org

EPA Watersense:
www.epa.gov/watersense

Smart Growth Strategies
for Clean Water Report:
www.resourcesaver.com/file/tolmanager/CustomO93C337F42157.pdf

www.smartcommunities.ncat.org

www.greywater.com

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If we have missed or misspelled anyone, please let us know by emailing anna@tetonwater.org or calling (208) 354-3871

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BOARD SPRING CHALLENGE EDUCATION MATCH FUND!

from LeAnn Talbot, FTR Board Fundraising Committee

There's an African saying that it takes a village to raise a child. At FTR, we take the responsibility of helping to educate the children in our community very seriously. Along with clean water, healthy streams and abundant fisheries, education is a primary goal of our organization.

In partnering with public and private schools in Teton Valley, FTR is making sure we are creating the next generation of water stewards to protect our precious resource. We teach children indoors and out, all year long. Through the K-12 Teton Watershed Curriculum, children learn about water quality, macroinvertebrates, and riparian wildlife—all the while using math, reading, science and writing skills to complete their lessons. To reflect the changes in our community, the curriculum is now also available in Spanish so more people can participate in the learning.

Last year alone, over 400 students participated in our programs.

Since everyone is a child at heart, we also feature adult and community education classes and forums. This past year, we talked about hydrology, local watershed issues, stream-flow prediction for Idaho and the status of the Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

We feel passionately as a board and an organization that education is critical to what we do. But we can't do it by ourselves. We need the rest of our village to help us. To that end, our board has raised \$20,000 that must be matched before it is given to the FTR education program. Every dollar that you donate to FTR's education fund this spring will be matched by one dollar from this matching fund.



LeAnn Talbot at home on the Teton River.

You can send your donation to the FTR education program to:

PO Box 768
Driggs, ID 83422

or donate through our website,
www.tetonwater.org

Please join us in this education initiative by making a generous donation to [Friends of the Teton River](#) this spring.



Anna Lindstedt teaches a group of students about aquatic insects on Teton Creek.

Join **Friends of the Teton River** for the 7th annual Teton River Celebration and Adventure Auction.

Music by Ben Winship and Margo Valiante!

- Fabulous food
- Awesome auction items
- Great conversations

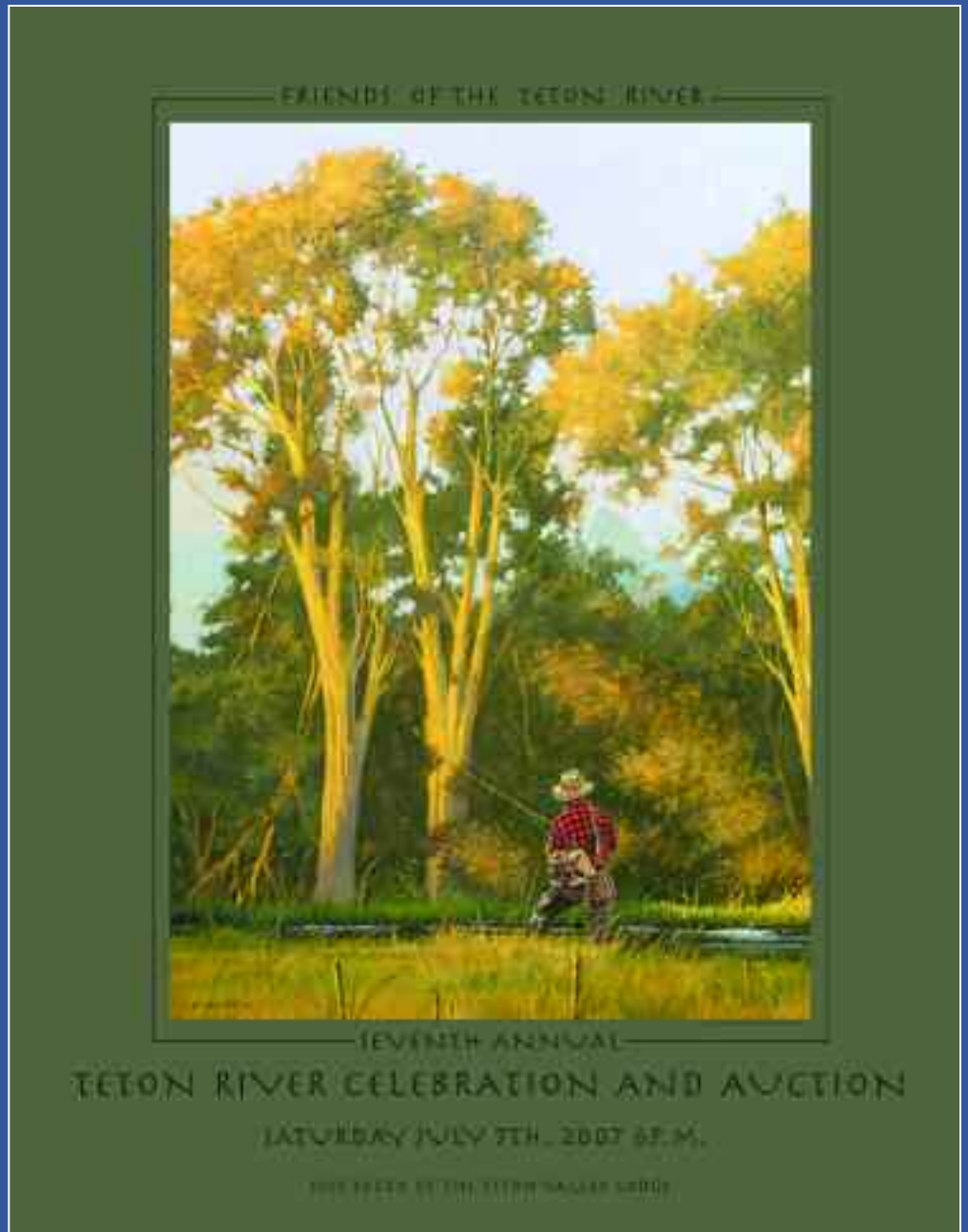
Saturday, July 7, 6pm
South of the Teton Valley Lodge

ADULTS \$20
COUPLES \$30
KIDS FREE!

2007 posters are now available for purchase at the FTR offices and around town!



Photo by Chris Evenstad



Artwork by Dan Burr

Friends of the Teton River

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