WATER LINE Teten River

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





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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LYN BENJAMIN

In this issue of *Waterlines* we celebrate the Teton, the river that runs through our valley and so many of our lives. After a rapid descent through the mountain tributaries, waters join the the river to flow gently through Teton Valley, providing a home for hundreds of species of fish and wildlife. We enjoy the river in countless ways, from an early morning float to a family camping trip to watching sandhill cranes dancing on its banks. Many of us eagerly anticipate winter's end so we can spend the spring, summer, and fall fishing the river. We share the river with our friends and family, and we take pleasure in precious moments of solitude on its banks.

This summer, we hope you will join us in celebrating our river.

In this newsletter we feature a conversation with Brian Berry, a new FTR board member, who grew up on the banks of the Teton and who now jointly owns the Teton Valley Lodge; we show you the spectacular FTR party that is a summer community highlight; we present ideas for water conservation during a summer where we're seeing flows on the Teton at historically low levels; and we invite you to be part of our tributary restoration projects, because healthy tributaries are the key to a healthy river.

While celebrating the Teton River, FTR also works hard to protect it. The health of the Teton reflects the health of its tributaries and of the valley's groundwater, because both of these ultimately drain into the river. Water quality, or the chemistry of the river, reflects land-use practices throughout the valley. Currently, water quality in the Teton River is impacted by silt, which washes in from eroding streambanks, and by nitrates that reach the river in groundwater contaminated by excess fertilization and animal wastes.



Photo by Melinda Binks

FTR has conducted, and will continue to conduct, large scale stream restoration projects to reduce sediment inputs to the river. We are also working hard to prevent future contamination of the river as the population of the valley increases and farming land converts to subdivisions. Many areas of the valley have high groundwater tables; in these areas, it is critically important that proposed subdivisions quantify the pollutants they will ultimately add to groundwater and hence the Teton River. If the level of pollutants exceeds acceptable standards, remediation steps need to be taken, either in the form of advanced sewage treatment systems or a reduced number of lots. Teton County's groundwater protection ordinance provides a mechanism to evaluate groundwater pollution through nutrient pathogen (NP) studies. We applaud the Teton County commissioners and members of the Planning and Zoning Board for enacting this ordinance and for attending a recent presentation by Paul Hunter of Millennium Science and Engineering. Hunter's talk concerned ways in which NP studies can be used for long-term protection of Teton Valley's drinking water and the health of the Teton River.

As we reflect on a summer spent enjoying the river's countless pleasures, let's also remember that a healthy Teton River requires responsible development practices throughout our valley.

Lyn Benjamim

RAISED ON THE BANKS OF THE TETON RIVER

An Interview with Brian Berry

> written by Amy Verbeten

As one sits on the banks of the Teton River chatting with Brian Berry, it is easy to understand why he has excelled as a guide. Brian is genuine and approachable, and his deep connection to the river comes across clearly. Brian's entire life has centered around the Teton Valley Lodge and the Teton River. His parents met while working at the lodge, and his family lived in one of the lodge's cabins when he was young. Many of his earliest memories involve playing, swimming, and fishing in the river that runs through his backyard. Brian began guiding in 1996, and is now one of the owners of the lodge. He became a board member for Friends of the Teton River in 2007. Here's what he had to share on a recent summer evening.

FTR: What is your earliest memory of the Teton River?

Brian: Probably my earliest memory would be going out to the mouth of Fox Creek with my dad. He would rig you up with a little nymph and throw it out, and you'd stand there and strip it back, and just catch a ton of fish. I also remember going out with my dad's partner, John Pehrson, and his son Steve. We'd go out in the boat; John would cast it out 'cause he could cast a lot further than we could. Then Steve would reel it in and set the hook, and I'd land it. We'd take turns like that, fishing the same rod. We fished the river all the time; had all kinds of crazy stories. One time we were out there, me and Steve. We had somebody else start the boat for us because we were too little - probably only eight or nine - and we were fishing and fell asleep in the boat. The motor died while we were asleep, and we floated clear down, below the bridge. We couldn't get the motor started back up; thought we were going to die. A neighbor found us down there and hauled us back home, saved our lives.

FTR: Guiding and running a lodge can be a tough way to make a living. Why have you chosen to stick with it?

Brian: I can't imagine wanting to live anywhere else. I've always wanted to do this, ever since I was a little kid. My dad's been doing it forever – he started guiding when he was twelve, and he'll

be 62 this year. It's just family tradition, and it's a great place to live; a great way to live. We have really neat people as customers; you grow up with them. Some of the people have been coming to the lodge for over 50 years, so I've known them my whole life. They become almost part of your family. You know about the time they're going to come every year, and look forward to seeing them. When they can't

come any more, it's a real sad thing. And I get to work with my dad, my brothers, my brother-in-law, my sister. And Tom Fenger [head guide at the lodge], he's like my uncle; he started guiding here the year I was born. It's just a family kind of deal.

FTR: How would you describe the changes you've seen in the valley and the river?

Brian: It used to be you knew everybody in town. I went to school with the same people grade school through high school. That's definitely different now, and I only graduated eleven years ago. But there's a lot of good people moving here, and a lot more opportunity. As far as the river goes, it has-



Brian Berry

continued from pg. 3

n't really changed that much. The river just ebbs and flows. If you've got water, the fishing's good; if you don't, it's tough. There is a lot more pressure on the river now than there was when I was a kid. It's interesting, though, when you think about that. You go back to the times when the lodge started, in the '40's, '50's, and '60's, and they tell stories about how you couldn't find a spot to fish,



Photo by Kisa Koenig

the river was so crowded. On opening day, every hotel in town would be full. It was because they stocked all these fish back then. The Teton River used to boast more fish per square foot than any river in the country, but it was because the fishing clubs put them all in – they just jammed it full.

FTR: What are your thoughts about conserving and protecting native fish populations?

Brian: Here's what I think about native fish. It may not be very popular with some people, but it's what I've come to believe

working on the river. Without the old fishermen, Lee Wulff and those guys, coming out to the West and writing stories about catching huge, non-native browns and rainbows in Yellowstone and on the Madison, people wouldn't care about fishing, and they wouldn't care about rivers. I wouldn't have my job; fly-fishing would never have become what it is today. There wouldn't be a Teton Valley Lodge, I don't think, and nobody would care about the Teton River. Fly fishermen have become huge supporters of river conservation, and have really made a difference in protecting water resources. I love cutthroats, they're beautiful; I think they're the prettiest fish. We catch tons of them every day, and the customers love them; they're great fun to catch. We definitely need to keep them, but we don't need to throw out the baby with the bathwater and kill all the other fish. We need to maintain a balance.

FTR: Why did you get involved with FTR?

Brian: Well, I was really involved from the very beginning, when it was formed. My dad and Rob Van Kirk were some of the folks who kind of spearheaded it, when they got concerned about how some of the big developments going in would affect the river. I've just always been concerned with the river; I love it, and want to make sure it's there forever. I want to stay here the rest of my life and work on that river, and it's important to me to be able to do that. It's a very special place.

FTR: What do you hope to see for the future of this river?

Brian: I'd like to see it stay just like it is. I have a lot of hope for this river. There's some downsides to all the development. I see more boats putting in, more people fishing the river every year, and I worry about overcrowding and pressure on the fishery. But there are also good sides to it. You've got a lot of developments on the creeks that are doing restoration – those are greatly beneficial. You've also got the county government coming around and protecting the river from pollution. There are very few rivers like the Teton. Other than the people, the Teton River is one of the most unique, most special resources we have here. People are starting to realize how lucky we are to live here, and that we need to protect it. There's a lot of people looking out for this river, and I really think it's all going to turn out okay.

2007 STREAM RESTORATION PROJECTS: A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

by Mike Lien

Hello folks, it's time once again for FTR's busy stream restoration season. We have several projects going that we are looking for volunteers to come and help with. FTR incorporates volunteers into our projects to provide an opportunity for the public to gain intimate knowledge of Teton Valley's water resources, to bring the community together for a good cause, to provide labor for the projects, and to help leverage grant funding. This summer, volunteers will be needed to help replace a dilapidated diversion structure on Badger Creek and to restore two streambanks on Trail Creek (Figures 1, 2 and 3).

The Badger Creek Project will consist of removing an existing diversion structure and replacing it with new headgates and a state-of-the-art fish screen. In the past, hundreds, if not thousands, of our native Yellowstone cutthroat trout perished in the canal when water levels dropped and they were unable to return to



Badger Creek. The new structure will use rotating screens to prevent fish from entering the canal, while allowing water to pass through to the canal. The existing structure is also in danger of collapsing, which could lead to the failure of several downstream canal structures. Volunteers will be needed August 27–31 to help revegetate and fence the area once construction is complete.

The first of the Trail Creek stream restoration

projects is located within the City of Victor and is designed to stabilize 100 feet of streambank that is rapidly eroding towards Dogwood Avenue. The project will use rock

to armor the toe of the bank and erosion-control fabric and vegetation to stabilize the upper portion of the bank. Volunteers will be needed July 24–27 to help place erosion-control fabric and to revegetate the upper streambank.

The second of the Trail Creek stream restoration projects is located near the Teton River on Garl Drake's property. This project will stabilize and restore 255 feet of streambank using bioengineering techniques. Volunteers will be needed from October 15–19 to construct fascines, brush mattresses, and brush barbs using willow cuttings.

If you are interested in volunteering for any of these or future projects, please contact FTR and we will enter your information into our Volunteer Database. FTR will be calling folks on the volunteer list three to four weeks before each project. FTR greatly appreciates all the hard work volunteers have provided over the years and we look forward to working with both returning and new volunteers.



Trail Creek Drake Streambank Restoration Project



Above: Mike Lien, FTR Restoration Director; Left: Badger Creek: Rebuilding a dilapidated irrigation diversion and restoring streambanks.

Thank you donors and sponsors for making the Friends of the Teton River 2007 River Party and Adventure Auction a great success! We couldn't do it without you!

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2007 FTR RIVER PARTY

Thank you for making the River Party and Adventure Auction a great success for the seventh year! About 350 "river folks" came out for our annual event to enjoy great food, music, and friends by the Teton River. For the first time, party goers weathered a small rainstorm at the event opening—crowding under tent canopies and placing their silent auction bids during the downpour. The event and auction raised over \$14,000 that will directly benefit programming for clean water, healthy streams, and abundant fisheries. A special thank you to Jon and Karen Huntsman for graciously donating the beautiful party property year after year; Bubba's BBQ for the delicious dinner; Ben Winship, Margo Valiante, and Dave Thompson for delightful river music; the United Bank of Idaho for their sponsorship; Clackacraft for donating the drift boat for auction; and the many donors and volunteers who made the party possible through their generous support.

We hope to see all of you again next year!









Clockwise from Top Left: Development Director Anna Lindstedt socializes with party volunteers Nick Beatty and Alex Meiners (photo by Greg LeFevre; Bubba serves up a fine BBQ! (photo by Reid Sullivan); Playing on the FTR driftboat that was donated by Clackacraft and auctioned for \$6,500 (photo by Greg LeFevre); Bonnie and Zoe Self—Zoe's sporting an FTR onesie! (photo by Mike Merigliano); Party goers crowd under the tents during a short rain shower. (photo by Emily Palm)



& ADVENTURE AUCTION

















Clockwise from Top Left: A fabulous unnamed juggler (photo by Reid Sullivan); Jim Reinertsen, FTR board member (photo by Greg LeFevre); McKenzie Owen auctions Derek Hutton off as a river guide (photo by Emily Palm); Forest Edwards (photo by Jill Hansen); Pat Markert of the Royal Wolf serves up beverages (photo by Emily Palm); Donna Brace Ogilvie (photo by Reid Sullivan); Jeff and Nathan Carter watch the auction (photo by Reid Sullivan); Ben Winship, Margo Valiante, and Dave Thompson entertain the crowd. (photo by Emily Palm)

Resort Jackson Hole Nordic Center Java the Hut Jim Reinertsen Jon & Karen Huntsman The Knotty Pine LeAnn Talbot The Links at Teton Peaks Lucatelli Café Lyn Benjamin Magpie Margo Valiante Mark Harrington McKenzie Owen MD Landscaping & Nursery Mountunes Patagonia Peaked Sports Phil & Leslie Lansing Pike & Smith Law Office **Reid Sullivan** Rendezvous **Backcountry Tours Rich Carlson River Time Designs** Rob Van Kirk **Ross Films** The Royal Wolf Sands Wild Water Raft Trips Simms Smith's **Snake River Brewing** Sue Tyler Teton Aviation **Teton Reserve** Teton Science School **Teton Springs Three Rivers Ranch** Tony's Pizza and Pasta United Bank of Idaho Victor Emporium Warbirds Westbank Anglers Wilson Backcountry Sports Woman Tours Yellowstone Fly Rods YogaTejas Yostmark Mountain Equipment FTR Board of Directors **River Party Volunteers** FTR Staff

Jackson Hole Mountain

Conserving Water Makes Cents

by Amy Verbeten



It is not news that this has been a dry year. As of May 1, snowpack levels in the Teton Basin had dropped to only 28 percent of average. According to Teton County's drought emergency declaration, May through July streamflow volumes for the Teton River were forecasted to be at a near record low of 36 percent. Unfortunately, dry years

like this are likely to become increasingly common. According to the National Center for Atmospheric Research, hydrologic changes will be among the most significant potential impacts of climate change, and these changes will have a substantial effect on water resources in the West.

At the same time that water resources are becoming increasingly limited, demand is increasing due to rapid population growth. Idaho residents have not yet begun taking significant steps to curb water use. According to researchers at the University of Idaho, Idahoans use more water per person per day in their homes and businesses than do the residents of any other state. It is imperative that we take measures to improve domestic water efficiency. Conserving water not only helps protect water resources and the environment, it also makes good financial sense. Conserving water can decrease the rates for water, sewer, and electric bills, and also help minimize future increases in these rates. If you use a well, simple conservation measures will prolong the life of your pump, and possibly the well itself.

Much of what is written about water conservation conveys only bad news, and offers strategies for conserving that are overly complex. This article is the first in a series in Waterlines that will share practical, simple steps for significantly reducing water conservation in homes and businesses. The focus of the article is on toilets, which can be a major water waster in your home.

Here are two simple steps that can make a big difference in your home or business.

1. Replace old, inefficient toilets.

The single best thing you can do to reduce domestic water use is replace an old toilet. Due to a government mandate, toilets manufactured after 1995 must use no more than 1.6 gallons of water per flush (gpf). Older toilets can use 5 or more gpf. Most toilets have the manufacturing date stamped into the porcelain under the tank lid. The simple step of replacing a pre-1995 toilet with a standard, new toilet could save up to 22,000 gallons of water per year for a family of four. If you use a city water and sewer system, this could amount to a savings of more than \$1,000 over ten years. The Saving Water Partnership has developed a list of "Flushstar" toilets that perform well and demonstrate a greater likelihood of long-term water savings. Go to www.savingwater.org, or call (206)684-SAVE for the list. In most cases, toilets that cost less than \$100 are just as good as toilets costing far more, making this a great investment!

2. Check for, repair, and prevent toilet leaks.

Leaking toilets cause more water loss than any other fixture. Even a silent toilet leak (one you normally can't hear) can waste 30 to 500 gallons of water per day—a cost of \$50 or more per year for city water and sewer users! A leak you can hear will waste much more. Here's a simple way to check for toilet leaks:

- 1. Remove the tank lid. (Don't worry, the water is clean until it enters the bowl.)
- 2. Add some food coloring to turn the water a different color. Put the tank lid back on.
- 3. After 30 minutes, look in the bowl. In a properly functioning toilet, water should only move from the tank to the bowl during flushing. If you see colored water in the bowl, you have a leak. If the water is clear, water is not leaking from the tank to the bowl.

Fortunately, most toilet leaks are easy to fix. The most common cause is a worn-out flapper (the rubber item at the bot-



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Photo by Melinda Binks

STAFF NEWS AT FTR

Many Thanks to FTR's Summer Interns

Friends of the Teton River has been extremely lucky to have two fantastic interns, Greg LeFevre and Josh Wise, as part of our staff this summer. Summer interns are an invaluable asset, and are primarily responsible for much of the on-the-ground data collection so vital to our organizational decision making. This summer, our interns spent a good deal of their time collecting daily gauge readings and taking discharge measurements on creeks and diversions throughout the valley. This information is provided to Deputy Watermaster Denny Thomas, allowing him to adjust headgates so that the appropriate flows are maintained for downstream water users. The interns also collected monthly water-quality samples throughout the valley, adding to our long-term water quality database.

Summer Hydrologist **Greg LeFevre** graduated from Michigan Technological University in December 2006 with a Bachelor of Science in environmental engineering. He interned in the past with Citizens for Conservation (Chicago) in restoration ecology, the Indian Health Service (New Mexico) as an engineer, and the World Wildlife Fund's Southeast Rivers and Streams project (Nashville). He's also participated in research in Mexico, Nicaragua, and South Africa, and has conducted watershed



Josh Wise

modeling and groundwater research. This fall, Greg will begin a Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota in environmental engineering.

High School intern **Josh Wise** initially learned about our summer internship program through an educational partnership between FTR and Teton Valley High School. He began working for FTR in the summer of 2006, and did such an excellent job that we invited him to return for a second summer. Josh has lived in Teton Valley for most of his life, and his local knowledge of back roads and obscure diversion canals has proved invaluable. Josh will be a junior at Teton High School in the fall, and he's considering pursuing a future degree in the sciences. Many thanks to Karen Schied for sponsoring Josh's internship!



Greg LeFevre

continued from previous page

tom that keeps water in the tank). Toilet flappers are available at hardware stores for about \$8 each, and take just minutes to install—an easy fix for a costly problem! Check for leakage again after installation; if it persists, you may have to do a more involved but still relatively simple replacement of the entire flush mechanism. H2ouse.org is a great resource for information on toilet repairs, in addition to lots other simple, well-researched water conservation ideas.

To prevent having to repair toilet leaks frequently, avoid using caustic toilet bowl cleaners (those big, usually white tablets you drop into the tank). These cleaners damage plastic and rubber toilet parts, causing severe leaks and requiring costly repairs. Many toilet manufacturers actually void the warranty on toilet parts if tablets are used. As an alternative, use in-bowl, rather than in-tank, cleaners.

We'll provide more ideas for water conservation in future issues of **Waterlines.**

NATURE NOTES

A note from the staff



Photo Above: Sticky Geranium; Below: Amy Verbeten identifies wildflowers with two hikers on an FTR wildflower hike. Photos by Amy Wright With a very active staff and membership, we are always amazed at the great fishing stories, wildlife sightings, and natural wonders we hear about! We wanted to share some of them with you. Please share your recent nature stories with us by e-mailing info@tetonwater.org with "nature notes" in the subject line.

FTR Development Director Anna Lindstedt was out on her morning run when she realized a wild turkey was running alongside her in the borrow pit. The gobbler joined her on 100 South for about a quarter mile. Kim Goodman of Trout Unlimited was mountain biking on the Aspen Trail one evening and encountered

a fully grown mountain lion around the bend of a hairpin turn in the Slocum Creek drainage. She made lots of noise and the large cat ran off. We're glad she had good brakes! In mid-June, FTR interns summer Greg LeFevre and Josh Wise, while working, spotted a badger along the side of Teton Creek near the Creekside subdivision. The area is home to many small ground squirrels, which is the badger's main food source. Although Greg

calls Wisconsin, the Badger State, "home," he admits that this is the first time he has seen one of the critters! On this same day, the pair also saw a snowshoe hare wearing its dark summer coat. On the recent Big Hole Wildflower Hike, FTR member Ellen Rosenau and Education and Outreach Director Amy Verbeten were trailing behind the group, absorbed in conversation and wildflower identification. As they neared the top of the ridge, their leisurely pace allowed them to notice three tiny, delicate Calypso orchids growing in the shade of a grove of firs just off the trail. Office Manager Jill Hansen returned to Teton Valley in early July, safe and sound from her house in South Lake Tahoe, where over 3,000 acres of forest and 250 homes burned. She reported that a little black bear was found running alongside the fire fighters during the blaze. He was tranquilized, and upon further investigation they found his paws were burned. They administered antibiotics and placed him in a safe area away from the flames.



ORGANIZATIONAL TOTALS Look what we've done!

It's an understatement to say that FTR has been "busy" over the past seven years. It's hard to believe that we started with just ten members in the year 2000. The first year FTR it was operational, FTR was run out of executive director Lyn Benjamin's one-room cabin on a budget of

less than \$30,000. We now have over 800 members, five full-time staff, two summer interns, a project budget of \$390,000, and no sign of slowing down. We thought we'd take a moment to reflect on a few of our accomplishments and share these "FTR totals" with you.

- Prior to 2007, FTR had restored 6,835 feet of streambank, planting over 10,000 willow poles and 1,100 five-gallon potted riparian plants (including willows and cottonwoods) around the valley.
- In 2007 and 2008, FTR plans to complete nearly 20,000 feet of streambank restoration, and plant 30,000 willow poles and more than 5,600 five-gallon potted riparian plants. That's over three times the streambank restoration accomplished in the past six years combined!
- FTR estimates that we have contributed over \$1.5 million to watershed programs (including restoration, water quality, and research) and over \$150,000 to watershed education and outreach.

- Our Watershed Education program reaches over 400 Teton Valley students each year.
- We have taken at least 750 water samples since 2001.
- FTR has surveyed 25 miles of Teton River streambank and habitat.
- In 2005 trout population crews surveyed 14 tributaries to the Teton River, hiking over 450 miles and capturing more than 2,500 trout in a summer of work. (The trout were counted and released from the buckets unharmed, of course!)
- Current staff members have nine dogs, a cat, a horse, and a pet rock among them.

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Many thanks to all of our supporters. You are the ones who make all of our work possible.

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





Friends of the Teton River is expecting a record-breaking finale to our seventh year of participation in Old Bill's Fun Run. We count on your generosity and your dedication to clean water, healthy streams, and abundant fisheries to reach our goals. This year will be especially important for us, as it is the last year of participation in Old Bill's for all Teton Valley nonprofits. Take advantage of the last chance to have your donation to FTR matched by the Old Bill's funds. If you have never given through Old Bill's, or would like to make a donation online, please visit the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole website at www.cfjacksonhole.org.

Contributions are accepted starting July 4 and must be received no later than September 14, 2007. Thank you in advance to all who participate. We've certainly had a good run!



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