



water lines

SUMMER 2018



Sharing Stewardship



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Dear Friends,

There is much to be excited about when it comes to innovative water management in eastern Idaho and the role that conservation organizations, like FTR and the Henry's Fork Foundation (HFF), are playing in solving issues affecting irrigators and agricultural producers, aquifer management, critical ecological flows, and wild trout populations. Embedded in that excitement is the opportunity we have for sharing stewardship of our water resources by working closely with our colleagues at FTR (and the Teton Valley community) on a host of projects.

While HFF and FTR have shared information for years—especially science and monitoring data—sharing stewardship is what we are doing to integrate that knowledge on the ground. A great example is how the Teton Water Users Association is using hydrologic and groundwater modeling provided by Dr. Rob Van Kirk, Senior Scientist at HFF. Other examples include: HFF research staff and interns pitching in to assist FTR with fisheries and stream flow monitoring, HFF staff members Ben Ortman and Jamie Laatsch assisting FTR with the economic and recreation survey, while FTR's Development Director Anna Lindstedt wrote grants to enable the Teton River to be included in the study. The partnership between HFF and FTR leverages funding and human resources while allowing each organization to accomplish more. I believe this to be beneficial for the members of each organization.

This new level of coordination is not occurring by accident. The board and staff leadership at both FTR and HFF are pursuing integration of our work at all levels because we have goals big enough to warrant the infusion of more resources into our respective programs. Fish friendly farming, soil health, and water management that enables resilient wild trout fisheries are just a few of the concepts we're working on. The best and most recent example of the growing HFF/FTR partnership is the landowner outreach manager joint position. With Bryce Contor filling that role, HFF and FTR expect to realize long-lasting conservation gains that benefit the watershed and are realized through healthier streams and relationships. I am thankful for FTR's willingness to partner, share stewardship, and achieve more for this place that we all cherish.

Brandon Hoffner

Brandon Hoffner
HFF Executive Director



Executive Director, Amy Verbeten, and daughter Greta planting flowers.

We are intentionally shifting toward an approach that recognizes, supports, and grows our entire community's capacity to problem-solve and plan for a future that meets diverse needs for water and diverse approaches to watershed conservation.

Sharing Stewardship

As the parent of a preschooler, I spend a lot of time thinking about growth and development. My husband and I find ourselves constantly adapting our parenting style, methods, and approach to match our daughter's rapid development. As an infant, she needed constant, hands-on nurturing, and relied on us to meet her every need. That approach is no longer appropriate for a preschooler who emphatically wants to "do it myself!" yet still needs a great deal of guidance and support. In the coming years of adolescence into young adulthood, it will be our job as parents to provide her with the skills and resources to become increasingly independent in making her own decisions and meeting her own needs—eventually reaching the point where she is completely self-sufficient.

I am learning that stewarding a nonprofit organization is not unlike parenting a child. Eighteen years ago, FTR was born from the ideas of a founding board and executive director. It was their job to foster the organization from infancy and to nurture their ideas and the organization's growth. As with most organizations, FTR experienced a period of significant change and growth through its adolescence, and we struggled at times to understand our role. Today, as the organization is gradually entering into a period of maturity, FTR's leadership is making intentional shifts in the way we foster and support self-sufficiency of the organization and its mission.

Many of you, our members and partners, have noticed and commented on this shift. In recent years, FTR's board and staff have strategically worked to grow our capacity through partnerships, and to actively cultivate a sense of shared stewardship for the Teton River Watershed. We are intentionally shifting away from trying to do everything ourselves, and toward an approach that recognizes, supports, and grows our entire community's capacity to problem-solve and plan for a future that meets diverse needs for water and diverse approaches to watershed conservation.

In this issue of *Waterlines*, we highlight our partnership with the Henry's Fork Foundation, and the ways in which we are sharing staff and fundraising resources. We also feature our community education program, which is designed to build skills, knowledge, and understanding that will lead to an engaged and informed community of water resource stewards of all ages. Our Farms & Fish Initiative is bringing together our membership to raise money to support the capacity for highly skilled agricultural producers to experiment with and adapt best management techniques that will benefit people, farms, and fish, and to share their knowledge and skills with one another. In all of these ways, and many more, we are all working together to actively cultivate, nurture, grow, and sustain a sense of shared stewardship for the river and the watershed we love and depend on. Thank *YOU* for growing your partnership, support, and participation alongside us for the past eighteen years as we pursue these efforts.

Amy Verbeten

Amy Verbeten
FTR Executive Director

From Education

Community Education Is Our Foundation

FTR's community education program is fundamental to FTR's success as an organization. Since FTR's founding, cultivating watershed stewardship through education has been an integral part of our mission. For eighteen years we have worked with local schools to provide high-quality field and in-classroom watershed science programs; we are also a community resource, organizing events and sharing information that covers a variety of relevant water-related issues.

Trout in the Classroom

More than 150 students in eight Teton Valley classrooms raised rainbow trout from the egg to fry stage in their cold-water aquariums. Students learned first-hand about the rainbow trout life cycle, diet, anatomy, and species identification. This program is made possible by partnerships with Teton Valley Trout Unlimited and Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Stream Study

Each fall, 5th grade students from the Rendezvous Upper Elementary School spend two days comparing and contrasting Spring Creek and Teton Creek. Students get their feet wet studying macroinvertebrates, velocity, temperature and our local riparian ecosystems.

Water Awareness Week

For the fifteenth year, more than 150 Teton Middle School 6th graders celebrated Idaho's Water Awareness Week with field trips to the Teton River. Students participated in hands-on activities, led by local water resource professionals, to learn about the various aspects of our watershed and cultivate a sense of stewardship for our water resources.

Nitrate Testing

In partnership with Teton High School FTR offers free nitrate testing for private well owners each spring. FTR has collected data on nitrate levels in private wells since 2012. This provides valuable information on county-wide trends and may help identify problems with elevated nitrates in our groundwater before they become harmful to human health and extremely costly to remediate.

WaterWise Community Education

Each year FTR hosts a series of educational events, presentations, and/or workshops designed to bring people together around water. We explore the ways water connects the economy, community, and environment in the Teton River Watershed.

In the
classroom

In the
field

Sharing
Experience

Community
Education
Events

Connecting
Community
to Water

FTR is committed to maintaining quality K-12 educational programs while growing our program audiences through community partnerships.

Communities, like bee colonies, depend on the diversity of a population for survival,

To Stewardship

Connecting The Community To Water

FTR's goal is to offer educational programs that connect our community to water and to each other. This goes well beyond teaching in the classroom or hosting a community meeting. Programs rooted in education increase collaboration and communication amongst stakeholders, support peer-to-peer exchanges (learning from each other about what's needed and what works), and enable the community to take part in local solutions.

mitted
ng high
and adult
programs
the reach
ms and
we serve
community
rips.

Agencies

Farmers and
Ranchers

Fishing
Guides

Schools

Home
owners

Businesses

City and
County

Visitors and
Residents

NGOs

as each bee
performs a
specific task to
support the hive

Community-wide Events

FTR events are a great way to get involved, learn more, and connect with us and your community. The Fishing Season Kick-off of June 7 is now open to the public (not just for fishing guides) and provides an annual update about fishing and the fishery. New this summer, FTR and the Teton County Farm Bureau are offering a Teton Valley Farm Tour on August 1 to show agriculture and conservation in action. (See the Summer Events Calendar on the back page for more details).

Opportunities and Incentives

It's hard to know what steps to take as a homeowner to actively protect water resources. FTR is intentionally seeking funding and partnerships that give homeowners opportunities to make decisions with the health of water resources in mind. In 2018, FTR is partnering with Teton County on a *Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day*; Teton Springs Foundation is providing a \$50 cost-share for septic tank pumping for a second year of the *Septic Incentive Program*; and FTR is working with the City of Driggs and Teton Creek homeowners on future restoration options for the creek.

Sharing Knowledge, Sharing Costs

FTR is invested in developing locally based solutions for improving surface and groundwater resources while keeping Teton Valley's working lands working. Through the 2018 Farms & Fish Initiative, FTR will provide more than \$16,000 in incentive funding to agricultural producers to test and monitor innovative conservation farming techniques (cover crop and conservation tillage) aimed at improving water quality/quantity and soil health. We are learning from and with agricultural partners, including the Teton Soil Conservation District and the Teton County Farm Bureau, so that we can work together to advance best-management practices, specifically for Teton Valley.

Informed Community & Shared Stewardship

Adding Up River Recreation & Use

As river recreation and visitation to the Teton River has noticeably increased over the past few years,* FTR has made a concerted effort to gather input regarding public access and use, and prioritize efforts to address these issues.

*According to the Idaho Department of Labor, Teton County grew faster between 2006 and 2016 than any county in Idaho.

*According to IDFG Creel Surveys, the estimated number of angling hours (total hours of angler effort) on the Teton increased from 57,000 hours in 2010 to 91,222 hours in 2016—a 60 percent increase in seven years.

This summer, the Teton River will be the focus of a region-wide assessment of the economic value and recreational use of the upper Snake. This will be the third and final year of a larger study that includes the Henry's Fork, Henry's Lake, and the South Fork, where public input was gathered over the past two summers. A similar economic impact and recreation study was conducted a decade ago for our neighboring rivers, but this is a first for the Teton.

FTR and Henry's Fork Foundation interns and volunteers will be collecting public input and data through user surveys distributed at public access points from Memorial Day through September. River users will be interviewed at-random, and will have the choice of completing a mail-in paper survey or an online version.

Survey respondents will help answer questions about:

- recreational use including fishing and non-fishing activities;
- the economic impact of river use on the local/regional economy;
- the personal value of the river to the participants; and
- the proportion of the economic value of angling associated with the native trout fishery.

Survey results will provide a basis for our agency partners and the community in making informed decisions regarding recreation and use planning that will best conserve the Teton River as an ecosystem, resource, and recreational amenity long into the future. Stay tuned this fall and winter for survey results and FTR events to gather your input on recreation and use.

Thanks to our project partners!

FTR is able to participate in this important study thanks to a \$4,950 grant from the Community Foundation of Teton Valley; a partnership with the Henry's Fork Foundation (who has invested \$163,000 to complete the study); the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Weber State University—who are contributing significantly to the overall study design and statistical analysis; and you, our friends and members who actively participate with your feedback to conserve the river we love.

Join FTR in welcoming Bryce to the team!



For the first time, FTR and the Henry's Fork Foundation (HFF) are sharing a position and staff member between the watersheds and the two partner organizations with the hiring of Bryce Contor as the landowner outreach manager in April.

With deep family roots in southeast Idaho, Bryce has fifteen years of experience in irrigated agriculture and has spent the past twenty years in water resources work and hydrology. He has raised irrigated hay and grain in Howe, Idaho; has worked potato harvests in Teton Valley, Newdale, and the state of Washington; and has conducted hydrologic assessments from Idaho to Algeria.

In Teton Valley, he'll primarily work on efforts to improve water quality, soil health, and sustaining family farms (all goals of FTR's Farms & Fish Initiative). With the support of significant state and federal grant funding, these projects include irrigation infrastructure upgrades, water transactions, crop rotations, conservation tillage, cover crops, and implementing best management practices with farmers and ranchers.

Bryce is thrilled to work for and with both watershed organizations, and has long admired our commitment to collaboration and respectful dialog. In connection to his new position, Bryce shared a phrase that keeps coming to him from his high school days in the Future Farmers of America: "I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of deeds—achievements won by the present and past generations of agriculturists; in the promise of better days through better way." (Quoted from the FFA Creed.)

Growing Community Capacity

Growing “capacity” is something to strive for as an established nonprofit organization. But what does that mean? Capacity building is generally defined as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, and resources that organizations need to more effectively accomplish their mission (often by investing money back into the organization). For example, NGO’s can add to their capacity by hiring more staff or making upgrades in technology or resources.

During nearly eighteen years of operation, our donors and community members have helped us to grow in our capacity and capability to implement highly effective programs and projects. With your support, we have earned national recognition for our work while remaining small and efficient, with a real focus on using resources wisely and building financial stability.

By supporting our annual operations and special campaigns, you have grown our capacity to work with the community, leverage more matching funds, and re-invest these funds back into our watershed through the shared efforts of individuals and partner organizations. We are finding that the most effective way to accomplish our mission is by supporting our community’s capacity to actively participate in watershed conservation through a model of shared stewardship; sharing ideas and expertise, as well as sharing costs, the work-load, and community-driven solutions.

GROWING CAPACITY:

INVESTMENT

\$7.2 million

Funding FTR has invested directly into watershed conservation and restoration since inception (2001).

FUNDRAISING

\$1.3 million

funds raised in 2017 for direct investment in watershed improvements, restoration, and cost-share projects for our community.

STAFF

50 years



Combined number of years that FTR’s six year-round staff have served FTR, the watershed, and the community.

2018 Ways to Give:



Farms & Fish Initiative

Farms & Fish kicked off last year as a joint-effort of FTR and the agricultural community to raise funding for projects that improve soil and water management and directly benefit local farms and our trout fishery. Our goal this year is to raise \$30,000 in private donations in order to leverage an additional \$240,000 in grant funding to restore fish habitat in partnership with farmers and ranchers on the Teton River. Lead donors to this campaign will be recognized during the August 22 Farms & Fish Benefit at the Teton Valley Lodge.



Fisheries INnovation Support (or FINS)

Your donation to FINS will support FTR’s capacity to continue cutting-edge fisheries research on the Teton River. The Wilkes Short Family Foundation has made a \$10,000 Challenge Grant and will match gifts to this program in honor of the late John Short and the hard-working guide staff at the Teton Valley Lodge.



Donations accepted
June 1 – July 27 @
www.cftetonvalley.org

11th Annual Tin Cup Challenge

The Tin Cup Challenge is Teton Valley’s biggest nonprofit fundraising event of the year. Donations to FTR through the Community Foundation of Teton Valley are matched by Community Challengers—making your donation go even farther! FTR has raised \$735,000 through your generous Tin Cup contributions over the past ten years.

Become A Member

Our members keep us working for watershed protection, conservation, and restoration. Your gift, big or small, makes a difference. To donate: use the enclosed envelope or visit www.tetonwater.org.

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donate by mail or online:
www.tetonwater.org

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2018 SUMMER EVENTS

JUNE

7 Fishing Season Kick-Off Party

Start your season off right! Join FTR, Teton Valley Trout Unlimited, and Idaho Fish & Game for a fisheries report and giveaways for fishing guides. 5:30–7:30pm

20 Nonprofit Pint Night

Join FTR, TRLT, VARD, and TVTAP for an evening of fun, food, and pints at Grand Teton Brewing Company. Proceeds from pint sales benefit these nonprofits. 5–8pm

AUGUST

1 Teton County Farm Tour

Hop on the bus and take a tour around Teton Valley farms and ranches followed by a locally sourced dinner. We will explore the intersection of agriculture, water use, and land use. Space will be limited, RSVP required. 208-354-3871, 2–7pm

22 Farms & Fish

This is an RSVP only event to benefit FTR's Farms & Fish Campaign. Donors will enjoy a field demonstration and outdoor reception with locally sourced farm fare. 5:30–7:30pm

NEW EVENT August 4

Don't miss this NEW celebration of music and rivers! Join FTR and the Targhee Music Foundation for this family-friendly event with local fishing and river businesses, raffle prizes, pay-per-plate Knotty Pine BBQ and beverages, plus live music.

FEATURING:

Folk Songs for Children with Thomas Sneed
Slackline | Growling Old Men | Spencer Bohren

Fins & Fiddles T-shirts available
for pre-order until July 1.

Email info@tetonwater.org or stop by the
FTR booth this summer at the Farmers
Market in Driggs for merchandise.

Artwork by Kathleen Hanson,
Hanson Illustration.

