



water lines

SUMMER 2020

Celebrating Twenty Years





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Cover Photo: Photo contest winner, Howie Garber,
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Production: Powder Mountain Press

Friends of the Teton River
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PO Box 768
Driggs, ID 83422
(208) 354-3871 info@tetonwater.org
www.tetonwater.org



Amy Verbeten

Looking downstream

“It has been said that in a contest between a river and a rock the river always wins. Why? Because the river is willing to follow the natural call of gravity—going over, under, or around the rock... the rock is stuck where it is, relentlessly pushing against the river, resisting the natural flow of water until, over a long enough period of time, it’s worn down to a pebble [that eventually becomes a part of the stream].”

— DENNIS MERRITT JONES, AUTHOR

Thus far, 2020 has provided us with many obstacles and a great deal of opportunity to practice flowing around them. Fortunately, the past twenty years have prepared us well for these challenges. Twenty years of building relationships with partners who have stepped forward to lend a wide range of support during these challenging times. Twenty years of evaluating the best available data, questioning and verifying what we think we know, making the best decisions we can based on the current science and conditions, and then adapting as we learn more. Twenty years of operating a lean, efficient, scrappy organization. Like both the river and the pebble, we will all be inevitably and indelibly changed by the current events. Yet I truly believe that, like the river, we will endure—by going over, under, and around—thanks to your support and your strength that you have provided over the past two decades, and that I believe you will continue to provide as we go forward. Stay well, friends, and thank you for your continued support.

Amy Verbeten

Amy Verbeten
FTR Executive Director



Photo: Camrin Dengel

Navigating Challenges Together

Dear Friends,

In these challenging and uncertain times, our small staff at Friends of the Teton River has been fortunate to keep working on our highest priority watershed conservation projects and programs remotely from our homes, on the river, and in the field. As our community grapples with COVID-19 impacts and cutbacks, we believe it's of the utmost importance to renew our commitment to you—that we will continue to protect and improve the water resources we all share by working collaboratively with our community partners, using science and place-based solutions.

We are doing work we never thought possible. Twenty years ago, we may not have dreamed we'd be working with generational farmers and ranchers to plant cover crops or use no-till methods, adopting ways to manage water that meets the needs of agriculture and fish, and monitoring soil and water health together (page 2). We couldn't have predicted we'd become a model for innovative fisheries research in the West, completing dozens of small-scale to multi-million-dollar stream restoration projects, and recovering native cut-throat numbers that were on the brink (page 3). FTR has had many "firsts" over the years, setting the precedent for how a watershed group can work and what can be accomplished through creativity and collaboration.

We have come a long way by working together. By listening and learning from local voices and community leaders, we have been able to find win-win solutions and to cultivate a shared sense of responsibility for the Teton River watershed. Working together is how we do business, and during the current health crisis, grassroots collaborative efforts have proven to be what makes our communities stronger and even more resilient. Your support not only gives us the capacity to keep working on essential projects, programs, and services—it strengthens our ability to help our community when they need it most, with grants and resources that are invested in the local economy and ecosystem.

Thank you for your commitment to us, for all or part of the last twenty years. From all of us at Friends of the Teton River, thank you for your dedication and care for our river and streams. We know that there are many critical needs at this time, and we have all been impacted in different ways. This year's events and outreach will look a bit different than other years, without large gatherings or the 20th Anniversary Celebration we had planned. What remains the same is our community's ability to rally together in support of those things that matter to us—clean water, healthy streams, and a thriving fishery—now and long into the future.

With gratitude,

The FTR Board & Staff

2020 Updates

Water Quantity



Aquifer Recharge

Last year, FTR and participating irrigators had measurable success increasing late season flows in the Teton River. Participating farmers and ranchers recharged 10,000 acre-feet of water in the spring of 2019, thought to provide an additional 10 cfs of flow to the Teton River in the late summer, when fish and wildlife needed it most. In 2020, we are building on the program's success by adding two more canals, making for a total of sixteen recharge locations.



Canyon Creek

FTR and the irrigators in the Canyon Creek drainage have been working together to identify ways to restore more water to this tributary, which runs a total of 45 miles from its headwaters in the Big Holes to its confluence with the Teton River Canyon. Canyon Creek is an important Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout spawning stream, but has had limited flow in the creek below the large unlined canal located near Green Canyon Hot Springs. To help cutthroat numbers, the Canyon Creek Canal Company has partnered with FTR over the past decade to improve stream function and fish habitat. Now the partners are working to improve flow, providing connectivity to pristine spawning reaches upstream of the points of irrigation diversion. In 2020 and 2021 the canal will be unused, and the partners will pilot strategies to improve flow and stream temperatures to benefit the fishery, while maintaining water for irrigation throughout the summer months. Through the project period, FTR will collect water and fisheries data that will be used to develop a cost-effective, long-term, flow restoration strategy that achieves desired ecological outcomes, while maintaining water supply to support agricultural needs.

Habitat Restoration



Buxton River Park

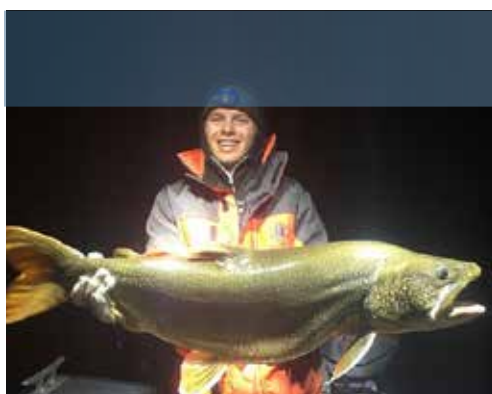
The Buxton River Park property at the Bates Bridge was purchased by a group of conservation partners in 2017 to improve safety, recreation, and river access on the Teton County-owned portion and to protect and restore habitat at the site, including a 42-acre conservation easement managed by the Teton Regional Land Trust. In helping to secure the property, FTR's focus is to restore healthy instream habitat, stabilize eroding banks, and improve water quality throughout the adjacent stream section. This fall, FTR will begin restoration work on the streambanks located downstream of the boat ramp. The restoration work will include stabilizing a 350-foot cut-bank, creating new floodplain benches, and planting riparian vegetation and wetland sod. The restoration design is based on a stream condition assessment completed by Biota Research and Consulting last year with grant funding from the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation. Contributors to the first of two restoration phases planned for the property are listed on page 6.

Fisheries



Tributary Trout Assessment

When FTR started as a watershed conservation group twenty years ago, very little data had been collected specifically about native cutthroat, their habitat, and the watershed conditions impacting the fishery. In 2005, FTR spearheaded the first Teton watershed-wide trout population study, electro-fishing 123 sites on eighteen tributary streams to establish baseline data for trout distribution (*Where are trout found in the watershed?*), composition (*What species and age classes are found?*) and abundance (*How many trout are there in a given location?*). This survey has taken place every 5 years (2005, 2010, 2015) and will be repeated this summer, providing valuable data to assess risks to native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, to work with agencies and project partners to evaluate the impact of our restoration projects, and to help prioritize future conservation work.



Welcome Fisheries Crew

FTR welcomes **Max Lewis** to our team as our new Fisheries Field Technician. Max attended St. Lawrence University, where he graduated with a B.A. in environmental studies and economics. Max has previously worked for the U.S. Forest Service in southeast Alaska, Trout Unlimited in Montana, and for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in Jackson, WY. Max is leading fisheries and monitoring efforts and enjoys learning about a new watershed and its species. He will be joined by returning crew member **Cirque Gammelin** and high school intern **Gus Prissel** to conduct field work this summer.

Water Quality

The H₂KNOW Program is Back!

Convenient Well Water Testing at an Affordable Price

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Pay for your well water test kit online and pick it up at the FTR office.	Complete your Chain of Custody and Water Source Survey forms.	Follow sampling instructions to fill sampling containers with your tap water.	Return samples and completed paperwork to location specified at kit pickup.	Receive results via mail or email in 6-10 business days.
WHAT ARE WE TESTING FOR? Bacteria Presence/Absence Nitrate + Nitrite as N Fluoride Chloride Sulfate		YOUR COST PER KIT \$40	TOTAL RETAIL VALUE \$90	ADDITIONAL TESTS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE pH \$12 Total Hardness \$12 Lead \$15 Arsenic \$12

*By participating in this cost-share program, testing results will be shared with FTR and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Questions? info@tetonwater.org or (208) 354-3871

To help test and maintain the safety of your drinking water, FTR has 75 cost-shared well water test kits to distribute through the H₂-KNOW program to Teton Valley residents on a first come, first served basis. Each test kit costs \$40 and includes certified lab testing for presence/absence of Coliform bacteria, Nitrate +Nitrite, Chloride, and Sulfate with the option of adding tests such as Lead and Arsenic for an additional fee. Samples will be collected only on October 6 and completed kits must be returned between 7-10:30 am at the specified drop off in Victor or Driggs. To purchase a test kit, visit our online store at tetonwater.org/store. Please contact zena@tetonwater.org for any additional information or questions. H₂-KNOW is funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of Teton Valley.

Thank You, 2019 Donors!

2019

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January 1 – June 30, 2019 *

Caddis Fly (up to \$99)

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Blue Winged Olive (\$250 - \$499)

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Trish & Mike Boyd
Deborah & Bob Malheiro

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Greg Stone

Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (\$1000 - \$4999)

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**Donors please note that FTR's fiscal year has changed. Fiscal year 2019 ended on June 30, 2019, acknowledging donors giving in a six-month period starting January 1, 2019. Donors giving between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020 are recognized in FTR's fiscal year 2020.*

Tin Cup donors (June-July 2019) are recognized starting on the prior page.




2019-2020 GRANTS

Organizational Capacity

Donald C. Brace Foundation 
Bonneville Environmental Foundation
Teton Springs Foundation (technology)

Water Resources/Stream Flow

Idaho Water Resource Board 
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Bureau of Reclamation
LegacyWorks Group
The Nature Conservancy
Columbia Basin Water
Transactions Program

Farms & Fish Initiative Programs and Aquifer Recharge

The Nature Conservancy
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Environmental Quality 
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EPA Environmental Education Grant
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National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Patagonia World Trout Initiative

Teton Creek Restoration


Flood Control District #18 
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Donald C. Brace Foundation

Buxton River Park

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Donald C. Brace Foundation
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Community Foundation of
Teton Valley 
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 Multi-year funding

FTR's Annual Report for FY 2020 will be available in the fall of 2020

FRIENDS OF THE TETON RIVER PRESENTS

LIFEBLOOD: FROM FARMS TO FISH

SHARING THE STORY OF AQUIFER RECHARGE IN TETON VALLEY



Private group showings/presentations (up to ten individuals) can be arranged by contacting Development Director Anna Lindstedt, anna@tetonwater.org.

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NOW SHOWING THROUGH
DECEMBER 2020

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MAKE A DONATION TO
SUPPORT FARMS & FISH
IN THE GALLERY OR ONLINE
TETONWATER.ORG

EVENT POSTPONED

COLOR ME!!



For the health and safety of our community, Friends of the Teton River has decided to postpone our annual summer celebration. Thanks to our friends at the Knotty Pine and Sneaky Pete and the Secret Weapons for their understanding and support. We hope to bring da' funk next summer when we turn 21!



Howie Garber

This summer, join us for a morning or evening in the field exploring our current watershed conservation projects.

Visit our website for event schedule and topics.

tetonwater.org/get-involved/events/

All activities will be outside, limited to 10 people (floats limited to 12) and structured so that participants can maintain 6 foot distancing the entire time.



ON SALE NOW

FTR 20TH ANNIVERSARY RAFFLE

One winner per month in August, September, and October. Purchase raffle tickets at the FTR store online tetonwater.org/store/. Tickets are \$20 per raffle entry—purchase as many tickets as you like and join these local businesses in supporting Teton Watershed conservation.

Raffle Prize #1 Grand Targhee Resort



Win an Adult Season Pass to Grand Targhee Resort for the 2020-21 ski season. Available for purchase July 15. Winner drawn August 15. **Proceeds will benefit the Teton Creek Corridor Project.**

Raffle Prize #2 WorldCast Anglers



Win a guided fishing trip and glamping overnight for two at the renowned South Fork "Hilton" (book by 2021). Available for purchase August 15. Winner drawn September 15. **Proceeds will benefit stream restoration at Buxton River Park.**

Raffle Prize #3 Teton Valley Lodge



Cast & Blast Combo: Win a guided day of the finest fly fishing and wing shooting the Teton River has to offer. Available for purchase September 15. Winner drawn October 15. **Proceeds will benefit the Farms & Fish Initiative.**

Thanks to everyone at FTR for what you do in preserving, restoring, improving, and protecting the Teton River and its watershed.

"Cheers to 20 more years!"

- The WorldCast Anglers Team

Congratulations to FTR in celebration of twenty years of service to the community. It's gratifying to see the accomplishments, staff stability, and maturation of the organization since walking in to the East Little Street office in 2007. - Chuck Iossi, President, Board of Directors, 2013

Happy Birthday Friends of the Teton River! You should be commended for all your dedication, hard work, innovative thinking, and accomplishments. The fishery resources in the Teton River, the habitats they depend on, and the people who call that area home have all benefited from your work. Thank you for your efforts and here's to another great 20 years of collaboration! - Brett High, Regional Fisheries Manager, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Some salmon are red,
Some white fish look blue...
But where would all the Yellowstone cutthroat trout be without you?
- Allison Michalski, Idaho Conservation Associate for Greater Yellowstone Coalition/former Outreach Coordinator for FTR

Happy Birthday!

I'm proud of this organization for all the projects it has achieved over the years, and so glad to have been a small part of those efforts in the field. I take peace in knowing that at this very moment, there's probably an FTR staff member on a stream somewhere working to improve the watershed. - James Fraser, former Fisheries Technician (Portland, Oregon)

Here's to 20 (plus) more years of collaborative friendship and work! Let's keep those fields and pastures green as the waters flow into the serene Teton river! Thanks for all you do. - The crew at the (row)foot J Ranch & Meats

Happy 20th to FTR! The Teton Valley community is so lucky to have you protecting our world-renown aquatic resources. We are grateful for FTR's legacy, and deeply appreciate your continued education, collaboration, and leadership. - The Board, Staff, and Membership of Valley Advocates for Responsible Development



**CONGRATULATIONS
photo contest winners**

Cover:

Howie Garber;
Alaska Basin

Postcards:

Josh Jablow;
moose family on the Teton River
Drew Carbone;
father and daughter fishing
Robert Warren;
cutthroat in gravels

**A big thanks for all of the
photo entries!**

**MAIL A POSTCARD
TO A FRIEND AND SHARE
THE BEAUTY OF THE
TETON WATERSHED.**

**Become a member.
Get Involved.
Give.**

Sign up for our
e-newsletter, check our
calendar of events (and
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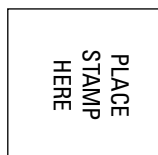
 Robert Warren



 Drew Carbone



 Josh Jablow





📷 Drew Carbone

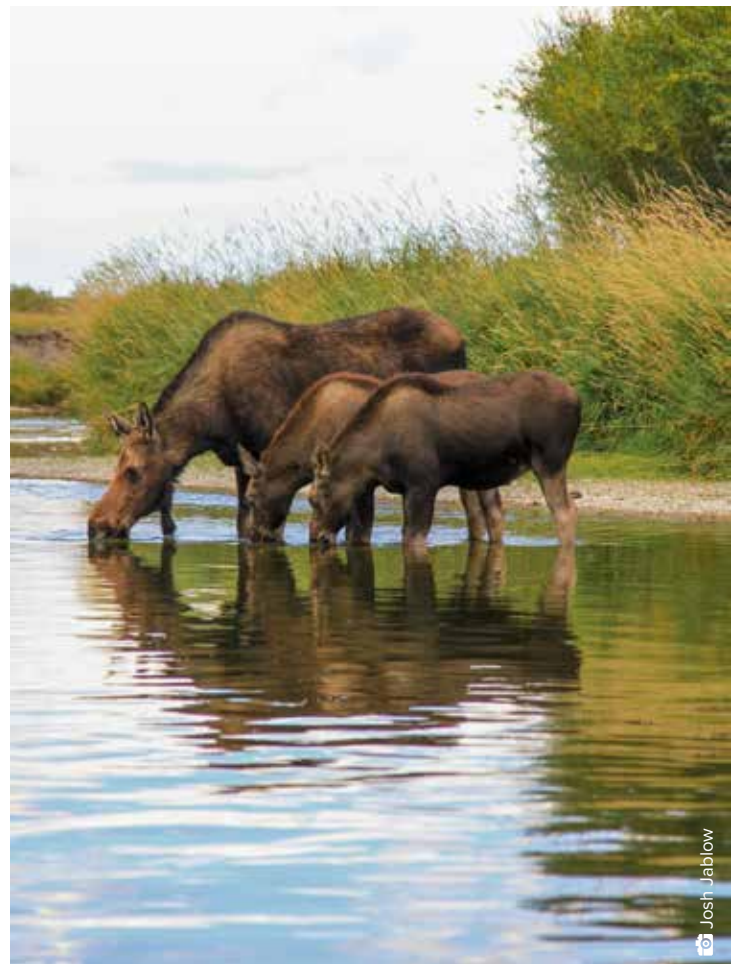
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