



water lines

NEWSLETTER 2026



CHARTING OUR COURSE

Working together to conserve a
healthy Teton River watershed

JUNE - AUGUST

NEW!

RIVER POP-UPS

Date/Time: June - August, dates TBD

Location: Buxton River Park (Bates Bridge)

Check our social media postings for the dates FTR is at the markets, July through September. Our staff will have information and the latest FTR merchandise for sale.

JUNE - OCTOBER



FARMER'S MARKETS

Date/Time: Fridays, 9:00AM - 1:00PM

Location: Driggs City Plaza

Check our social media postings for the dates FTR is at the markets, July through September. Our staff will have information and the latest FTR merchandise for sale.

JULY 18



TIN CUP EVENT DAY

Date/Time: Saturday, July 18th, 9:00AM - 12:00PM

Location: Driggs City Park

Visit the FTR booth at Tin Cup event day - a celebration of non-profits and community giving. Visit the Community Foundation of Teton Valley's website to donate: cftetonvalley.org

SEPTEMBER



WELL WATER TESTING EVENT

Date/Time/Location: TBD, in early September

Want to know more about your well water? FTR coordinates an annual testing event, with well water test kits available for purchase. Order your kit and receive instructions about water collection dates, drop-off locations, and specific tests available (e.g. nitrates & bacteria) by contacting info@tetonwater.org

Scan for a full list of events and detailed information or visit tetonwater.org



Calendar of Events

Visit the Friends of the Teton River website for more information and to RSVP.

TETONWATER.ORG/EVENTS

SECOND CHANCE FILM SCREENING

Date/Time/Location: TBD throughout the summer at Teton Valley screening locations; check social media postings and our events page.

Join us for a screening of Second Chance, a Fish Camp film about anglers, ranchers, and conservationists who are collaborating to protect the Teton River—the last major free-flowing waterway in Idaho and one of the most beloved in the West.



JUNE 18

FISHERIES PROGRAM TOUR

Date/Time: Thursday, June 18th, 9:00AM - 12:00PM

Location: Six Springs Property, Teton Regional Land Trust

Explore spawning cutthroat redds, fisheries monitoring infrastructure, stream restoration and managed grazing at Six Springs Creek with FTR and the Teton Regional Land Trust. Participants must RSVP via our website in advance.



JULY 31

TETON VALLEY FARM TOUR

Date/Time: Thursday, July 31, 11AM - 4PM

Location: Various locations in Teton Valley

FTR and our partners at the Teton Soil Conservation District will host a half-day tour to learn how agricultural producers are implementing innovative best-management practices to improve soil and water health on farms and ranches in Teton Valley. Participants must RSVP in advance. Check our website for details.



AUGUST 13

RIVER RESTORATION TOUR

Date/Time: Thursday, August 13th, 9:00AM - 11:00AM

Location: Buxton River Park

Learn how rebuilding streambanks through bioengineering with native plants helps to improve water quality and fish habitat, benefiting all stakeholders in our watershed. Check our events page for more details.





"I'm excited to be working with the FTR team, this community, and getting my feet wet in the Teton River watershed."

—JUSTIN PETTY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STAFF

Anna Lindstedt, Grants Director
Patrick Leary, Development Director
Will Stubblefield, Programs Director
Mike Lien, Stream Restoration Director
Brian Van Winkle, Conservation Planning Director
Daniel Wilcox, Farms & Fish Program Manager
McKenzie Heras, Development Coordinator
Andrea Flores, Office Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Todd Warden

Front cover: Front cover: Headwaters of the Teton River meander through agricultural lands in the southern end of the Teton Valley. Photo: Will Stubblefield

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

FTR Names New Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Our Board of Directors is pleased to share that, after an extensive nationwide search, we have hired Justin Petty as Friends of the Teton River's (FTR) new Executive Director.

Justin brings more than two decades of conservation leadership to this role, most recently as the Sagebrush Sea and Columbia River Salmon Recovery Programs Lead for The Nature Conservancy of Idaho (TNC), where he secured multi-million-dollar restoration agreements, co-led Indigenous partnership initiatives, and managed conservation teams in Idaho working in coordination with partners across the west.

His career at TNC spans roles in land stewardship, conservation management, and philanthropy, including leading a \$75M capital campaign. On the ground, he has spent years advancing landscape-scale conservation and salmon recovery efforts in central Idaho, while building long-term relationships and connections across the state, including here in Teton Valley.

Justin's deep experience, enthusiasm, and commitment to watershed protection and conservation efforts in Idaho make him exceptionally well-suited to lead FTR into its next chapter. We hope you will have the opportunity to meet Justin in person—be on the lookout for him at our summer events.

We would also like to acknowledge our longtime Executive Director, Amy Verbeten, who departed last fall to accept a new opportunity that builds on her career of meaningful contributions to conservation. We are deeply grateful for all she accomplished during her tenure and wish her the very best as she continues this important work in a new role.

As always, thank you to our donors, friends, and partners for your continued commitment to FTR. Your support makes this work possible.

With gratitude,

Mark Anderson
FTR Board President

Charting Our Course

FTR's 2026-2030 strategic plan positions the organization to continue the legacy of collaborative conservation work that has defined our work over the last 25 years and prepares FTR to take action to meet the needs of a changing watershed.

In 2025, FTR updated its Strategic Plan to address changing conditions in the Teton River watershed, ensuring that FTR will continue to meet its mission **to restore and conserve healthy streams, clean water, and a thriving wild fishery in the Teton River watershed.**

FTR pursues its mission through four key strategies:



We work together with landowners, citizens, and agency partners to protect and restore watershed health.



Restore healthy, functioning stream channels, floodplains, riparian areas, and natural wetlands in the Teton watershed.



Use scientific data collection, long-term monitoring, and on-the-ground projects to protect surface and groundwater quality in the Teton watershed.



Conduct fisheries research to monitor Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout populations and prioritize projects to improve in-stream habitat, fish passage, and stream flow.

FTR staff, board members, and community partners shared consensus on changing conditions and threats to watershed health. Population growth and development, changing administration of water rights, non-native fish species invasion, and climate change impacts will undoubtedly shape our watershed in the coming years.



FROM THE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Collective Impact

We are fortunate to live at the headwaters of the Teton River. Our watershed sustains not only our valley, but farms, fisheries, wildlife, and dozens of communities downstream. With that privilege comes responsibility.

Our watershed is entering a new chapter. Our valley continues to grow. Recreation on our waterways is increasing. Mountain snowpack is changing, bringing variability in runoff timing and new challenges for summer water supply. These changes are shaping the future of the Teton watershed and the communities that depend on it.

The encouraging news is that we are well positioned to meet this moment. By working alongside agricultural producers, agency partners, and local leaders, Friends of the Teton River (FTR) is advancing practical, locally driven solutions that protect clean water, sustain working lands, and strengthen habitat for wildlife, including native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout. This work is grounded in science, collaboration, and long-term stewardship, and it moves forward thanks to people like you.

Gifts of all sizes strengthen our partnerships, keep conservation efforts ahead of change, and bring public funding to this watershed in ways that wouldn't happen without private philanthropy. When you give to FTR, you fuel community-based solutions to complex water challenges — ones that ripple far beyond our headwaters.

To those who have already invested in this work, thank you. I invite you to continue standing with us by renewing or increasing your annual support, or by establishing a monthly recurring gift that sustains this work year-round.

If you haven't yet joined this effort, I hope you'll consider making your first donation today. When you support FTR, you help ensure clean water, healthy streams, and a thriving wild fishery for generations to come.

With gratitude,

Patrick Leary



Give Today

Scan here to donate
online or to learn about
other giving options.



Drip by Drip, Drop by Drop

Alpine Air Coffee Roasting is donating a portion of every bag of Morning Hatch roast sold between June 1–September 30 to Friends of the Teton River. You don't even need to change out of your pajamas to help save a wild river! Not in Teton Valley? No worries, order a bag (or two, or ten) online and have it shipped to your door. The trout will thank you and so will we.

Grab a bag of Morning Hatch at alpineaircoffee.com or wherever Alpine Air coffee is sold locally.

Sunset from the rim of
the Teton River Canyon.
Photo: Camrin Dengel

Welcome On Board

FTR actively recruits volunteer Board Members to represent diverse viewpoints from within our community. These volunteer community members work together to advise, govern, oversee policy and direction, and assist with the leadership and promotion of FTR in a manner that supports the mission of the organization and the needs of the community. We are thrilled to welcome four new board members.



RAFE RIVERS

"I am drawn to FTR's blend of science and community collaboration, which is essential for protecting the Teton River watershed. My lifelong passion for rivers led me here, and I'm honored to support an organization that focuses on tangible projects that benefit both nature and the people living within the watershed."

Farmer and Owner at Canewater Farm in Victor, ID



STEPHANIE LENHART

"What attracted me to serve on the FTR Board is the organization's commitment to community-engaged restoration in the Teton River watershed. Bringing together a diversity of perspectives, applying evidence-based approaches, and conducting place-based research are all critical as we face social, environmental, and technological changes."

School of Environment and Master of Environmental Management Program lead, Boise State University



JOHN KOLB

"I joined the FTR Board to conserve this wonderful gift of the Teton River. As our valley experiences unprecedented growth, FTR's data-driven approach to protecting the Teton Watershed provides the thoughtful management our watershed urgently needs."

Retired Family Physician and Avid Angler



BETSY HERRMANN

"FTR brings science to the work of conservation, and values its collaboration with landowners, agricultural producers, agencies, and the public. I believe this is a great niche to make a real and positive difference on the ground and it is what attracted me to serve on its board."

Retired Natural Resource Manager with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service

We are grateful to all the past board members who have contributed to the organization's mission and direction. We would especially like to recognize the individuals who fulfilled board terms in the past year: Jen Pierce (2016-2025), Rick Richter (2019-2025), and Gini Van Siclen (2016-2025). Thank you for your dedication and service to your watershed and the FTR team.

Cattle graze working lands adjacent to the Teton River. Electric fencing keeps cattle off of streambanks restored with native willow clusters. Photo credit: Will Stubblefield

Working Lands, Healthy Rivers

FTR is launching the **Rivers and Ranches Program**, an innovative approach that brings agriculture and riparian restoration together to conserve working lands and water resources across the Upper Snake watershed. Funded through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Conservation Partners Program, Rivers and Ranches will expand FTR's technical assistance to ranchers in the Henry's Fork and Teton Basins over the next three years.

Building on a partnership with the Henry's Fork Foundation that began in 2017, FTR has worked alongside regional farmers and ranchers to keep working lands working for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and people. As growth and development accelerate across the watershed, this program is designed to speed up the adoption of conservation practices that sustain these lands for generations to come.

Program funding will support conservation and management plans on 3,000 acres of riparian-adjacent grazing lands, where decades of intensive use have degraded stream vegetation, increased erosion, and elevated water temperatures — putting species like the native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout at risk. These plans will make participants eligible for targeted assistance to restore soil health, improve water quality, and advance climate-smart solutions that strengthen the resilience of farms, ranches, and critical fish and wildlife habitat.

"The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and its funding sources. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government, or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation or its funding sources."

MEET THE TEAM

To advance the program's goal of integrating riparian restoration with improved grazing management, FTR will bring together staff with complementary expertise to implement this collaborative conservation effort. **BRIAN VAN WINKLE** will lead the work as Conservation Planning Director, drawing on more than 15 years of experience in fisheries research and stream restoration project management. He will be joined by **DANIEL WILCOX**, FTR's shared staff member with Henry's Fork Foundation, who specializes in agricultural best management practices and producer incentive programs. Together, they will partner with willing landowners to develop and implement strategies that align grazing management with riparian restoration, helping to improve watershed health while supporting the long-term viability of working lands.



BRIAN VAN WINKLE



DANIEL WILCOX



Are you interested in learning more about the Rivers and Ranches Program, technical assistance, or producer incentives? Scan to connect with FTR!

Accelerating the Implementation of Conservation Solutions

The Teton and Henry's Fork watersheds support one of the most important confluences of productive agricultural lands and critical wildlife habitat in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

The Rivers and Ranches Program will expand recent effort based on sound science and collaborative partnerships to offer practical conservation solutions, developed at a local level.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND LANDOWNER IDENTIFICATION

Ranking Criteria

- Ranking criteria including conservation benefits, feasibility of implementation, cost-effectiveness, and producer readiness will guide which properties receive conservation planning support.

Priority Areas

- Priority will be given to agricultural lands adjacent to riparian areas, where conservation actions can provide the greatest watershed and habitat benefits.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Habitat Enhancements

- Flood plain and stream stabilization, vegetative buffers, and wetland enhancement.

Grazing Management Approaches

- Fencing, native grass establishment, off-stream watering systems, and grazing strategies

INTEGRATING CONSERVATION AND WORKING LANDS MANAGEMENT

Data Collection and Analysis

- After identifying and prioritizing eligible agricultural landowners, initial site visits will collect data on water quality, fish habitat, soil health, vegetative cover, and carbon sequestration potential.
- Data analysis will identify key natural resource concerns and management opportunities.

Conservation Planning

- Using site-specific data and stakeholder input, the team will develop 50 conservation management plans over a three-year period, recommending best management practices and outlining conservation outcomes and potential economic benefits for producers.

IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT

Technical Support

- The Rivers and Ranches Team will provide ongoing technical assistance and post-project monitoring to ensure successful implementation and sustained conservation outcomes.

Cost-Share Assistance

- Landowners with completed conservation plans will receive support in identifying and applying for funding to implement conservation practices.
- The Rivers and Ranches Program will connect 30 producers with implementation funding, including government cost-share programs, during the three-year grant period.

Management plans will target riparian-adjacent grazing lands similar to these areas pictured in the upper Teton River watershed.
Photo credit: Kestrel Aerial Services



Counting Cutthroat

Two Decades of Monitoring Trout in Teton Tributaries

FTR is a nationally recognized leader in science and community-based watershed protection and restoration. This reputation is built on a 25-year track record of rigorous data collection and on-the-ground conservation work. At the heart of this work is an unwavering commitment to using science as the foundation for every program and project undertaken to protect and conserve the Teton River watershed.

Between 1999 and 2003, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT) numbers in the Teton River plummeted by 95% due to several natural and human causes. Much of FTR's fisheries research has been focused on understanding the root causes of this decline and improving conditions necessary for these native fish to not only survive but thrive – using the most advanced science available and building lasting partnerships with agency professionals and research scientists.

In 2005, FTR and agency partners established 116 electrofishing survey sites across 15 major tributaries of the Teton River — from the mountain headwaters near Victor to Moody Creek near Teton, Idaho. Conducted on a five-year cycle, the Tributary Trout Assessment has become one of the most robust long-term fisheries datasets available for any western watershed and native trout species. This data now informs management decisions at local, state, and federal levels, providing the scientific foundation needed to understand, protect, and restore the last-best stronghold for YCT in their native range.

Consistent, site-specific data provides something rare in fisheries science: statistical confidence. With 20 years

of data now available for eight core tributaries—Moose, Game, Trail, South Leigh, North Leigh, Teton, Badger, and Bitch Creeks—FTR and partners can conduct meaningful trend analysis that paints a watershed-wide picture of trout population dynamics. The long-term trends allow fisheries managers to better understand the impacts of changing water use, climate variability, water quality shifts, and habitat conditions to prioritize the conservation efforts most likely to move the needle for YCT in a rapidly changing landscape.

In the summer of 2025, with help from Idaho Fish and Game, the United States Forest Service, Idaho State University, BYU-Idaho, The Teton Conservation District (WY), the Henry's Fork Foundation, and private donors, FTR deployed a full seasonal field crew — five fisheries technicians and one graduate student. Together, they returned to all 116 established sites across 15 tributary streams, collecting fisheries, temperature, and habitat data with the same precision and protocol that has defined this program since its inception.

The completion of the 2025 Tributary Trout Assessment is more than a scientific milestone — it is a testament to what sustained, community-driven conservation can accomplish. Two decades of data tell a story of hard-won progress: YCT populations trending upward, record trout densities in key river reaches, and native fish reclaiming stream reaches they had nearly lost for good. The next 20 years of stewardship will be shaped by the science being collected today, and FTR remains committed to ensuring that every decision made on behalf of the Teton watershed is grounded in the best available evidence.



KEY FISHERIES FINDINGS IN 2025:



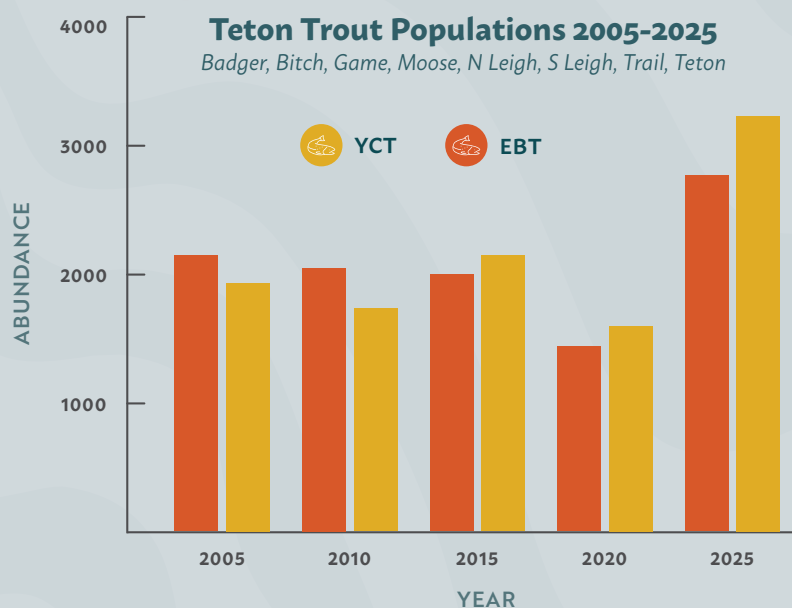
The Nickerson Reach (South Bates to Bates Bridge) in the Teton River showed a record of **4,017 trout per mile** (all species) in 2025. This is the highest trout density since surveys began in 1987 and YCT numbers outpaced Rainbow Trout (RBT) numbers **for the first time in 26 years with 1,066 YCT/mile to 699 RBT/mile.**



In the Parkinson Reach (Teton River Canyon), YCT populations have rebounded to **1,042 YCT per mile**, a significant increase from 389 YCT per mile in 2015. In the Teton River Canyon, YCT remain the dominant species with only **230 RBT per mile** in 2025.



Trail Creek showed a statistically significant increase in non-native Eastern Brook Trout (EBT) **from approximately 75% of the total population in 2005 to 95% in 2025**, underscoring the need for ongoing vigilance and targeted restoration to support native YCT populations in this tributary.



Scan for more fisheries data from the 2025 field season.

LEFT: Idaho Department of Fish and Game scientists hold healthy trout during population surveys on the upper Teton River. FTR works closely with agency partners to support data collection that informs fisheries management decisions.

ABOVE: The field science team logged some serious miles hiking into high mountain tributaries!

BELOW: FTR's Tributary Trout Assessment Team and partners on the water in the North Teton.

Talk of the Town: Rebuilding the Teton Dam?

Changing water supply raises conversations about future water storage projects in the Snake River Basin. The timeline below highlights some key events regarding this issue.

1976

The Teton Dam catastrophically failed during its first filling, sending more than one million cubic feet of water per second through the Teton and Snake River valleys — killing 11 people, destroying or damaging nearly 4,000 homes, inflicting lasting ecological damage on the Teton River fishery, and causing an estimated \$2 billion in damages.

2015

The Bureau of Reclamation and Idaho Water Resource Board completed the Henry's Fork Basin Study, examining current and future water supply and demand imbalances and evaluating strategies to address them — including surface storage, managed recharge, and water conservation. Of seven water storage alternatives assessed, the Teton Dam rebuild ranked lowest in social acceptability, environmental impacts, and total cost.

2022

The 1992 moratorium on new water rights in the Upper Snake River Basin was expanded to include tributary basins (like the Teton Basin) — a legal acknowledgment that the use of our water is outpacing the supply, now covering approximately 22 million acres, or 41% of Idaho's land area.

SUMMER 2024

Below-average snowpack in the Upper Snake headwaters, combined with decades of Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer depletion, prompted the Idaho Department of Water Resources to issue a curtailment order to groundwater users across the Snake River Plain. The order affected approximately 500,000 acres of farmland and triggered significant public outcry across eastern Idaho.

WINTER 2025

In response to the curtailment crisis, Senator Kevin Cook of Idaho Falls introduced Senate Joint Memorial 101, calling on state and federal officials to study and fund new water storage projects in Idaho — specifically naming the reconstruction of the Teton Dam as a priority.

SUMMER/FALL 2025

Senator Cook gathered constituent signatures and traveled to Washington D.C. with a delegation of eastern Idaho water users to lobby Idaho's federal delegation for support of a study examining surface water storage options in the Upper Snake River Basin.

WINTER 2026

The Idaho Water Resource Board and the Bureau of Reclamation drafted a proposal for the Upper Snake River Basin Study — a \$5 million effort to evaluate managed aquifer recharge, groundwater demand reduction, water conservation, and surface water storage alternatives, including potential new or expanded reservoirs.

SUMMER 2026

A funding decision from the Bureau of Reclamation is expected, determining whether the Upper Snake River Basin Study moves forward. If awarded, the multi-year study will assess alternatives and provide a technical foundation for future water management investment across the basin.

What's Friends of the Teton River's Role?

FTR has a strong track record of collaborative work with diverse stakeholders, including as a key contributor to the 2015 Henry's Fork Basin Study. We are currently tracking efforts to investigate new storage opportunities in the Upper Snake Basin, maintaining close contact with agency partners, local water users, and conservation groups. Should the proposed Basin Study move forward, FTR will seek a seat at the table — bringing robust fisheries data from the Teton River watershed alongside experience leading innovative water management strategies that benefit both farms and fish.

FY25 Financial Report

JULY 2024 - JUNE 2025

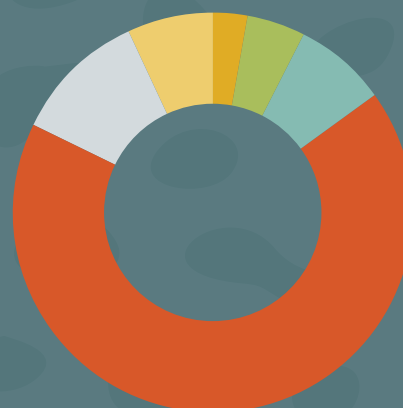
INCOME - \$2,518,004



DONATIONS	\$626,356	25%
FEDERAL GRANTS	\$1,391,968	55%
STATE & LOCAL GRANTS	\$285,629	11%
FEE-FOR-SERVICE CONTRACTS	\$170,332	7%
OTHER	\$20,469	2%

TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT **\$2,518,004**

EXPENSE - \$2,504,763



EDUCATION PROGRAM	\$72,180	3%
RESEARCH & MONITORING	\$110,315	4.5%
AGRICULTURAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS	\$193,779	7.75%
STREAM RESTORATION PROJECTS	\$1,687,741	67%
ADMINISTRATION	\$271,994	11%
FUNDRAISING	\$168,755	6.75%

TOTAL **\$2,504,763**

At the end of FY25, FTR had \$1,247,566 in total net assets; \$846,179 in unrestricted funds and \$401,387 in donor restricted funds designated for future-year activities. This summary represents FTR's audited financial position for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2025. FTR's form 990 is posted on our website tetonwater.org



ANNA LINDSTEDT
Grants Director

For over 20 years, Anna has secured funding for FTR's priority projects through grants and donor partnerships.

Match Making Success

Grants and donor matching funds work together to advance the mission of Friends of the Teton River by leveraging community investment to achieve meaningful conservation outcomes. Competitive grants provide critical funding for habitat restoration, irrigation infrastructure improvements, watershed research, and our staff to continue doing impactful work in the Teton Watershed, but require non-federal matching funds to demonstrate the commitment of our donors and community.

This is where we shine! FTR can seek grant funding for projects—big and small—thanks to contributions from individual donors, landowners, and community partners who invest in projects like the \$4.5 million-dollar "Reconnecting Canyon Creek" project, which was completed in FY25 through federal grants (\$2.8 M) matched by public support (\$1.7 M).

CONTACT US

Friends of the Teton River
P.O. Box 768
Driggs, ID 83422

DONATE BY MAIL OR ONLINE:
tetonwater.org

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PERMIT #8

Float Smart. Float Kind.

More than 65,000 visitors enjoy the Teton River each summer. With that many people on the water, every choice you make adds up. Help us keep this river wild, healthy, and welcoming for everyone — people, wildlife, and fish.



LAUNCH READY

Get Organized at the Access

- Gear up before you approach the water.
- Boat ramps are for vehicles with trailers. Keep small watercraft to the side, move through quickly.
- Use the restroom before you launch.



Check out our float guide and download the Upper Teton River recreation map!

ON THE WATER

Stay Cool on the River

- Share the river. Be courteous to anglers, other floaters, and wildlife.
- Respect private land. Most banks along the Teton River are privately owned. Stay on the water or on beaches and cobble bars.
- Dress for all conditions.
Always bring a layer and rain gear.



LEAVE IT BETTER

Be a Good River Neighbor

- Pack out everything you pack in.
- Dispose of human and dog waste properly.
- Keep dogs under control.
Dogs chasing wildlife harms the river ecosystem.
- Leave the river and shared spaces better than you found them for the next visitor.



Friends of the Teton River is the only organization dedicated to the health of our critical water resources. The community's drinking water quality, the health of our rivers and streams, and the future of wild fish populations in the Teton watershed hinges on the support and success of FTR's work.