

Celebrating 30 years!

our
place

INSPIRING YOU TO
PROTECT GREAT PLACES



TETON REGIONAL LAND TRUST

SUMMER 2020

ORIGINAL WATERCOLOR BY AIMEE BABNEAU

A Note from our Executive Director

SEEKING OUT SILVER LININGS



This year has already been unexpectedly challenging. Our lives and our future have been forever transformed. While this time has been difficult for everyone, my heart goes out to those that have lost family members and friends, those that have served on the front lines, those with the challenge of balancing their child's education and their professional responsibilities, and those that have struggled to make ends meet and keep food on the table.

Through all of this, I know I am lucky. I have been able to safely work from home, enjoy long walks in my neighborhood, and stay connected with the Land Trust team. My family has remained healthy. All that said, the last few months have not been without challenges and tough decisions. Worries about the health of family and friends, concerns about our ability to bring in the funds needed to maintain payroll, and the general sense of uncertainty have been unsettling (more on the next page).

This has me looking for silver linings in difficult times. Reflecting on this, I have been thinking about the loss of Wray Landon IV, a Land Trust staff member, who passed ten years ago. Wray was a force of nature. A talented naturalist and inspiring athlete, Wray brought energy and passion to his work. When he passed in an avalanche in 2010, we were devastated. But, thanks to the dedication of his parents, Lani and Wray Landon, and many others, something amazing came out of this tragedy. Shortly after his passing, the Wray Landon Legacy Fund was established. The fund has raised more than \$130,000 and has been used to move stewardship and restoration projects forward, support internships (Wray began his work at the Land Trust as an intern), and improve public access and education. Through this fund, Wray's legacy lives on and continues to make a positive impact on our community.

Silver linings are out there, and recognizing them brings me a sense of peace and hope. Seeing how just a few people came together after recognizing the threat of unchecked development to wildlife and open spaces of the region sparked a movement. This resulted in more than 36,000 acres and 54 river miles protected in east Idaho, which shows that anything is possible when dedication and passion are at the heart of the effort.

In celebration of our thirtieth anniversary, we are highlighting our shared accomplishments with the series *30 Years in 30 Stories*. I hope you will visit our website to engage in this celebration throughout the year. You can learn more about the impact of the Wray Land Legacy Fund and the life and contributions of long-term board member Ron Rope, who passed unexpectedly in mid-April. Ron served on the board for twelve years—more than a third of our history. His leadership led us through some challenging times and we are forever grateful he chose to spend his time and treasure advancing our mission.

Thank you for all the ways you contribute to the Land Trust's legacy!

Conserving working farms and ranches, fish and wildlife habitat, and scenic open spaces in eastern Idaho for this and future generations.

The Healing Power of Nature

CONSERVING NATURE CULTIVATES HEALTH

I can still remember the first time I realized the healing power of nature. I was around eleven years old on a cross-country road trip. We were camping along the shores of one of the Great Lakes after several days of travel. I was sitting on a rock overlooking the lake. The sun was dancing on the water as it set, the warm wind was blowing through the trees, and the air was filled with the sweet smell of pine. In that moment, I felt the calming influence of the setting as I got lost in the moment.

Humanity has long known that nature provides for us. Sun and soil provide food. Rivers and wetlands provide clean water. The air we breathe keeps us alive. These are the basic ecosystem services that have enabled civilizations to grow and thrive all across the world. But nature brings much more to our lives. It contributes to our physical and mental health and connects us to each other and to ourselves. **Sir David Attenborough sums up the importance of nature: “We must cherish the natural world because we’re a part of it and we depend on it.”**

Physically, spending time in nature has many benefits. Getting outside for exercise improves conditions like obesity, hypertension, cardiac illness, and chronic pain. Being in the sunshine also exposes us to vitamin D, a key nutrient that is hard to get in the food we eat. Having enough vitamin D in the body is important for helping fight osteoporosis and diabetes, and helping with depression. While supplements can help, time in nature is key to getting your daily dose.

The Japanese practice of forest bathing (*Shinrin-yoku*), or simply being in nature and connecting to it through our senses, has also been shown to improve eyesight and sleep. Soaking

up nature with all the senses improves nervous and immune system function and research suggests that time in nature can stimulate the production of cancer-fighting proteins.

Spending time in nature just feels good. Time in nature can serve as a catalyst to happiness. Nature grabs our attention and brings us into the moment. Watching a stream flow, catching sight of a colorful bird hopping along a tree branch, or coming upon a breathtaking view can take us outside ourselves, and disrupt the running narrative of stress and worry. These experiences can build resilience by reducing negative thoughts and cultivating inner calm and positive thinking. The impact can lessen stress and anxiety, improve mood, and reduce depression. Quality time outside in nature is energizing, reducing chronic fatigue and improving memory and cognition.

For me, one of the most important benefits of spending time in nature is the connection to something bigger than myself. Over the last few months, I have turned to nature more than ever. Cultivating a strong connection to the natural environment enhances my emotional well-being and has lessened the sense of social isolation. When I consciously take in the natural world, I am filled with a sense of appreciation and gratitude. Reflecting on the importance of nature gives me a deeper insight into life and reinforces the value of caring for nature as a vital way to care for myself, those I love, and our community. In stressful and challenging times, staying close to nature reminds me of its inherent value and encourages me to appreciate what Mother Nature provides even more. **The quote by Mary Davis sums up the impact nature has on my life: “A walk in nature walks the soul back home.”**



PHOTO BY JOSELIN MATKINS



PHOTO BY TIM MAY



Protecting Important Wetlands

A FAMILY'S LEGACY OF CONSERVATION



Birds enjoying the wetland on Fox Creek Ranch

by Nancy Huntsman

My late husband, Blaine, was an Idaho boy. He and his brother grew up in and around Pocatello in the 1940s and 1950s. As boys, they fished any creek they could reach by bicycle. Though the family later moved away, Blaine always looked for reasons to return to his favorite landscape. Later in life, he started traveling to Teton Valley for fishing trips with Teton Valley Lodge. Once he was able, he bought a small cabin next to the lodge. That became our family retreat for a good many happy years. Along the way, a friend and fishing guide introduced him to Fox Creek Ranch, and that is when our adventure began.

Fox Creek Ranch was a working ranch with summer pasture, a hay crop, and a spring creek flowing into the Teton River. I hadn't even seen the property when Blaine announced to me that we were buying it. That summer, we came to understand that our little spring creek had a heap of problems. It was badly silted up, with steep collapsing banks and almost no cover. In no time, what began as a romantic notion of a pretty ranch graced with a spring creek, became a major restoration project.

When we began, we really had no idea of the scope of the undertaking, the underlying science, or the regulatory world. Let's just say, we learned a thing or two. Through many meetings with partners like the Land Trust, Friends of the Teton River, Ducks Unlimited, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and their hard-working

professionals, we learned a lot about the factors that make a stream healthy and functional. The Land Trust staff helped us to understand the broader concept of riparian corridors. The fisheries biologists educated us about the Yellowstone cut-throat trout.

Finally, with the help of an abundantly talented team of committed people, we succeeded. We planted thousands of willows and other native vegetation. We excavated a series of three

large wetland ponds, creating more than 30 acres of open water and marsh. All of this worked to the benefit of aquatic, riparian, wetland, and upland habitats. We began as earnest landowners, and by the time we finished—thirteen years later—we had made new friends, broadened our vocabulary, and gained a

deep understanding of the interconnectedness of water, land, and wildlife.

Part of Blaine's legacy to his family was to instill in us a love for this land and a commitment to take care of it. We have been stewards of Fox Creek Ranch for 23 years. Last year our family placed an additional 100 acres under easement to protect more of the ranch. We are grateful to the Land Trust for working with us over the years, to help guide our restoration projects, and to help us preserve our land while maintaining it as a productive ranch. It has been an amazing adventure!

"We set out to transform a creek and along the way, we transformed our family, as well. As we came to understand the roles of water, land, and wildlife, we modified our ranch practices to safe-guard the land and water. Wildlife, especially fish and birds, responded. Because of our work together throughout the project, we turned to the Teton Regional Land Trust and with them worked out our first conservation easement in 2007." - Nancy Huntsman

lands for People and Wildlife



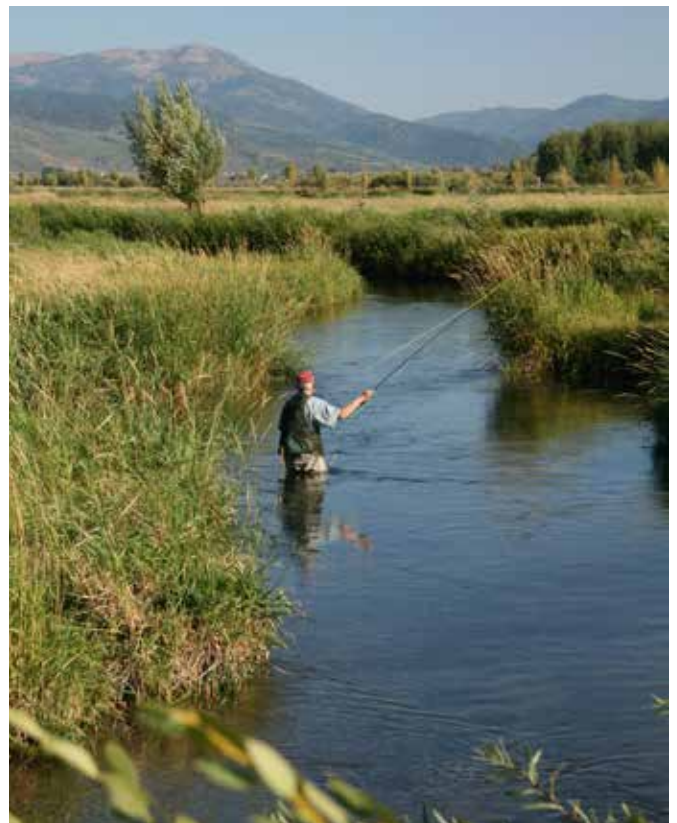
TETON REGIONAL LAND TRUST AWARDED \$1,000,000 GRANT TO PROTECT WETLANDS IN EAST IDAHO

The North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), like the Land Trust, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. NAWCA funding has resulted in more than 2,950 projects and protected more than 30 million acres of wetland habitat all over North America and Mexico. NAWCA was passed, in part, to support activities under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, an international agreement that provides a strategy for the long-term protection of important habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds.

NAWCA grants are a major catalyst for wetland conservation and restoration. Working with private landowners and partners across the region, the Land Trust has not only helped ensure clean water, but has protected important habitat for wetland-dependent species, including Long-billed Curlew, Greater Sandhill Crane, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bald Eagle, and White-faced Ibis to name a few. These efforts have added to and buffered regionally and continentally important core conservation areas. Together with our partners, we have secured \$9 million in NAWCA funding that has leveraged more than \$56 million in other conservation matching funds. These grants have protected over 14,500 acres of habitat and helped restore and enhance habitat on over 9,900 acres.

The goal of our most recent NAWCA grant is to strategically sustain and improve bird populations through the protection and enhancement of wetlands. Thirteen landowners, businesses, conservation organizations, and agencies partnered to provide over \$2.4 million in cash and in-kind match. More than 1,800 acres of habitat will be protected and/or enhanced in the Upper Snake River Watershed. The Huntsman Fox Creek property is a great example of the importance of NAWCA's support. We are currently working on several other projects

in the region with multiple federal and private partners. We are grateful for NAWCA, as well as all the state, regional, non-governmental, and private partners that have matched these important federal funds to see thousands of acres restored and protected.



Blaine Huntsman fishing a restored stretch of Fox Creek

Protecting Strongholds

CONSERVING RIVERS AND STREAMS TO SAVE AN ICONIC SPECIES



Looking for Redds along Six Springs Creek

Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT) are a symbol of our region. Endemic to the region and the river systems flowing out of the world's first national park, YCT have served as an important species for driving conservation in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Over the last century, their range has been reduced by overfishing, habitat destruction, and competition with introduced trout species.

YCT currently exists in only 60 percent of its historic range. The South Fork of the Snake and the Teton River, along with their tributaries, are remaining strongholds. The first conservation easement completed by the Land Trust was along Teton Creek, an important spawning tributary. The Land Trust has protected more than 1,230 acres along the Teton Creek Corridor, including the 847-acre Six Springs Ranch, the home of the Land Trust office. Six Springs is a spring-fed tributary that has been documented by the Land Trust, Friends of the Teton River, and others as one of the most productive spawning trib-

utaries in Teton Valley. The Land Trust has also been a part of protecting and restoring other critical YCT spawning tributaries associated with the Teton River, including Fox Creek, Bitch Creek, and Badger Creek.

On the South Fork of the Snake River, work by the Land Trust and the South Fork Conservation Partnership, including the Bureau of Land Management, the Nature Conservancy, and the Conservation Fund, has protected the majority of the South Fork River Canyon. Altogether, over 20,000 acres and miles of riverfront will remain undeveloped forever. More recently, the South Fork Initiative, a program of the Henry's Fork Foundation, has been working on restoration and research to improve habitat and water quality to support the fishery. Across the region, the recovery in trout populations is a result of successful land conservation and stream habitat restoration efforts by the Land Trust and many other partners.

DESCRIPTION

- Red slash along jaw and spots common to all cutthroat varieties
- Body mostly yellow-brown with darker olive or gray hues on the back, lighter yellow on sides
- Highly variable black spotting pattern

DISTRIBUTION

- Native to the Yellowstone River, Snake River, and Falls River drainages
- Require cold, clean water in streams or lakes

BEHAVIOR

- Spawn in rivers or streams in late April through mid-July
- Most important foods are aquatic insects such as mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies
- Also eat smaller fish, fish eggs, small rodents, frogs, algae, and other plants



Exploring the Teton River

The overlook along Highway 33 at the north end of Teton Valley offers an iconic view. From Harrops Bridge upstream to Fox Creek, TRLT has protected over 25 river miles and 10,000 acres along the Teton River.



Thousands of elk, mule deer, and moose migrate out of Grand Teton National Park each fall to their winter range in the wild and rugged Teton River Canyon downstream of Harrops Bridge.



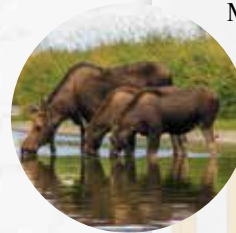
Agricultural lands are the lifeblood of the valley's economy. Working farms and ranches not only sustain our local economy, but also help maintain an open and permeable landscape for migrating wildlife.



There are many ways to access the Teton River to fish, float, bird, and connect with nature. Thanks to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Teton County for providing public access.



Moose are a common sight along the Teton River. The protected habitat along the river provides food and shelter year round for moose and other mammals like beaver, river otter, muskrat, and mink.



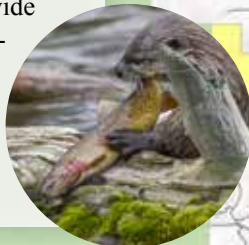
The unique alignment of shallow wetlands and the agricultural lands along the Teton River attracts the largest population of staging Sandhill Cranes in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. A fall float from South Bates to Buxton River Park is a great way to see these iconic birds.



Foster's Slough, between lower Fox Creek and Darby Creek is among the most ecologically important landscapes in Teton Valley. The area provides spawning habitat for native cutthroat and is home to an abundance of waterfowl, shorebirds, and many other wetland dependent plants and animals, including the largest shorebird in North America, the Long-billed Curlew.



The Teton River is home to a wide range of species from native Yellowstone cutthroat trout to river otter. The cool, clean water makes the Teton a world-class fishery.



- TRLT Conservation Easement
- Other Conservation Easement
- Idaho Department of Fish & Game
- Bureau of Land Management
- United States Forest Service
- Teton River Access

Visit our website or stop by the office to get your waterproof copy of our expanded version of Exploring the Teton River. The map includes river access information from the headwaters to the Teton Dam Site, natural history, and fishing regulations.

Founded in
1990

30 years
of Community Partnerships

54 miles
Riverfront
Protected

Celebrating 30 Years



PHOTO: ANNA KIRKPATRICK

50
acres
Grain for Cranes

23
Trumpeter Swans
Released

11
Conservation
Recognition Awards

Accredited Since
2008
First in Idaho



PHOTO: EMILY NICHOLS



4
Public Access
Areas

27
Restoration
Projects



5,000
Acres of Wetlands
Protected

Check out our *30 Years in 30 Stories* page on our website featuring the people, partnerships, and places that have made our work possible.



36,000 acres
Permanently Protected



Thousands
of Volunteer Hours

165
Protected Properties

132
Landowner Partners



over
100
Working
Farms & Ranches



PHOTO: EMILY NICHOLS



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"We support Teton Regional Land Trust's mission in conserving open spaces for our future generations. At Portfolio Solutions®, we adhere to a culture of servant leadership which parallels the Land Trust's values by leading and serving others by always placing the interests of others ahead of our own." - Portfolio Solutions®, Dinner on the Land and Taste of Teton Valley Sponsor

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 Teton Regional Economic Coalition
 Teton Valley News

For a full list of our 2019 supporters and partners, please watch for our 2019 Annual Report that will be posted on our website this fall.



Taste of Teton Valley

Saturday, August 29th from 4pm-7pm
 Celebrate our 30th Anniversary at Six Springs Ranch!

We will have food, drinks, music, and lawn games for the whole family!

Our conservation easement landowners will be honored with the 2020 Ed Hill Conservation Award.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR EVENT UPDATES AND CANCELLATIONS



2020 Crane Fest Poster design winner, Sue Tyler

Teton Regional Land Trust presents the 3rd Annual
Greater Yellowstone Crane Festival
 SEPTEMBER 14-19 TETON VALLEY, IDAHO

Come stay overnight in Teton Valley!*

*considering travel restrictions and social distancing requirements have been lifted



Letter from our Board President

PROTECTING FARMLAND ENSURES FOOD FOR THE FUTURE



The Nedrow family carries on tradition from one generation to the next.

In this unpredictable time, I find myself thinking about what is important. At the top of the list is the importance of the work of the Teton Regional Land Trust. Over the last few years, I have become increasingly dismayed by the acres and acres of good farm and ranch land lost to development. I worry about the future of my grandchildren. I fear that in the not-too-distant future, mankind will reach a tipping point where our need for food will exceed our ability to produce it.

I am a fourth-generation farmer with a small family farm in Fremont County, Idaho. My wife, sons, and I placed most of our land under conservation easement protection 18 years ago. I am comforted by the knowledge that our land will continue to provide food for the world, and hopefully, a living, for generations to come. While the Land Trust is not involved directly in food production, by protecting productive agricultural land, the two percent of us who provide the food for the other 98 percent, can continue to do so. I am also comforted knowing its value for wildlife and open space will be there forever. Since placing our land under easement, I have come to firmly believe in the value of protecting private land for wildlife, in addition to its value as farm and ranch land.

In the last 30 years, the Land Trust has been able to protect more than 36,000 acres because of support from you, our dedicated donors. The pandemic, and its fallout, could make it difficult to raise the annual operating funds to keep important projects moving forward. I am quite uncomfortable asking for financial support, while also knowing how many people are in need, but I believe that the mission of Teton Regional Land Trust to protect important agricultural land and keep it available for food production makes us worthy of support in these turbulent times.

Please join me in supporting our work! - John Nedrow



Remembering Ron Rope

JUNE 24, 1954 - APRIL 17, 2020

The Land Trust is so fortunate to have known Ron and to have had the opportunity to work with him as a board member (2000-2012), as our board president (2010-11), and with Sue, as our longtime supporters, members, and friends. Our hearts go out to Sue, Jesse, Alison, and all of their family. As stated in his obituary, “He found this work deeply meaningful, and eagerly contributed his time and passion to further local conservation causes among like-minded individuals.” Donations in Ron’s name would be gratefully accepted by the Teton Regional Land Trust or the Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust.

Dean Scofield, Emeritis Board Member, served with Ron and knew him well. He reflects: “Two or three sentences cannot do justice to Ron’s contribution to the Land Trust. Along with his penchant for using the scientific method, he brought a deep belief in the mission of the organization and his great love of life to bear on all aspects of the Land Trust. His leadership and thoughtful questioning improved the organization in all areas including finance, conservation, restoration, human resources, and community involvement.”

TETON REGIONAL LAND TRUST
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PLEASE REMEMBER US IN YOUR TIN CUP GIVING THIS YEAR

"I love the Land Trust and all that they do. [I give] to help preserve our region's natural habitat, for my grandchildren, and even for the progeny of our animals! If I give a little each month, I can give more and over time it amounts to a lot! I didn't know you call it a monthly membership, but I love being a member this way!" – Katharine Shepard, donor



"The Land Trust is our first responder when humans mess with Mother Nature." – Tom and Marjie Peter, Tin Cup donors

To give, go to cftetonvalley.org and select Teton Regional Land Trust as a donation recipient. You can also give via a form mailed to your home. Contributions are being accepted now through Friday, July 24, at 5 pm.

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SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER ON OUR WEBSITE.



Teton Regional Land Trust has been accredited by the Land Trust Alliance, meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust, and ensuring that conservation efforts are permanent.

A copy of the latest Financial Report and Registration filed by this organization may be obtained by contacting us at: PO Box 247, Driggs, ID 83422; (208) 354-8939
 Teton Regional Land Trust is a nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

