

# our place

INSPIRING YOU TO  
PROTECT GREAT PLACES



TETON REGIONAL LAND TRUST

WINTER 2021

# A Note from our Executive Director

## DRAWING ON OUR COMMUNITY FOR RESILIENCE



2020 has tested us individually and collectively. At the Land Trust, we started out strong in January—looking forward to celebrating our 30th Anniversary, connecting with our community and landowners, and advancing conservation across eastern Idaho. The pandemic changed everything. Like you, we were faced with new challenges, new worries, and a heightened level of uncertainty that we hadn't experienced before.

Going into spring and summer, we anticipated a recession and with it, a slowdown in the real estate market and tourism. What we have seen, as I am sure you have too, is quite the opposite. People from all over the country flocked to places like eastern Idaho, attracted by the wide-open spaces, clean air, and overall high quality of life. As a result, real estate activity picked up dramatically and we are as busy as we have ever been: Busy working with landowners buying and selling already conserved properties, busy fielding inquiries from landowners wondering if now is the time to protect their land, and busy working hard to maintain momentum as we experience an increase in the pace of development across the region. This has motivated our staff and board into action. We are focused on playing our part in ensuring that what has attracted all of this interest in our region isn't lost to development rapidly outpacing our community's ability to conserve the critical farmland, ranchland, and irreplaceable wildlife habitat that makes this place so special.

Maintaining our high quality of life is a once in forever opportunity and we must act now!

As we've stepped up to meet these rapid changes, we've learned how essential our network of supporters is to our ability to meet the challenges we face, while carrying our mission forward. More than ever, we are looking to our greatest strength—our ability to look ahead and act today to make a positive difference for the future. If this year has taught us anything, it is how much you, our network of supporters and partners, believe in our mission and show your commitment through your continued investment in our work. You also see the value in acting today to be a part of creating a better future for you, your family, humanity, and the natural world. Thanks to you and your loyal support, we have been able to overcome obstacles, work toward a brighter future, and navigate the uncertainty of the world around us.

For me personally, 2020 has challenged my resilience and resolve. In a time of such uncertainty, polarization, and division, I have found great comfort in the steady and forward-looking mission of the Land Trust. As the Executive Director, my role is to balance the hope with the heavy and to look forward to a positive and productive future. As we navigate these challenging times, we are investing in our organizational resilience so we can continue to be a part of a future for our region where people and nature thrive.

— Joselin Matkins

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

# Trumpeter Swan Project

## NESTING IN EASTERN IDAHO



*R13 released along with four other Trumpeters in 2016*

Trumpeter Swans are one of our region's most iconic birds. They embody the extraordinary landscape we call home. Trumpeter Swans are the largest waterfowl species native to North America and, in addition to being visually magnificent, they exhibit highly cognizant behavior, form strong family bonds, and can live up to twenty-five years in the wild. In the Greater Yellowstone region, Trumpeters can be seen and heard near ponds, rivers, and streams year-round.

The Teton Basin Trumpeter Swan Project is a partnership with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Intermountain Aquatics, and landowners. The goal of the partnership is to restore Teton Basin's population of nesting Trumpeter Swans as part of a larger effort to conserve the ecology and natural heritage of nesting Trumpeters in Yellowstone National Park and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. To accomplish this goal, project partners are committed to a long-term effort involving releasing captive-bred swans in an effort to establish a nesting pair. Since 2013, twenty-eight Trumpeter Swans have been released.

One of the Trumpeters released in 2016, affectionately named R13, has been spotted several times since 2016. Most recently, R13 was observed this summer in the Bechler area of Yellowstone National Park paired with a wild swan. Now five years old, R13 and his mate were seen exhibiting mating behavior. Although the hope is that someday there will be nesting Trumpeters in Teton Valley, it is exciting to see them making a home anywhere in the Greater Yellowstone region.

This fall, we released six cygnets onto a protected wetland in Teton Valley and have observed them bonding with a wild swan. Cygnets are young swans that are medium gray with a pale belly and wing lining. Most of our released Trumpeter Swans are marked with large green neck collars with white alphanumeric codes. This year's cygnets have a green leg band instead. If you observe green-collared or banded swans in our region, please notify the Land Trust. For more information or to support the project, please visit [www.tetonlandtrust.org](http://www.tetonlandtrust.org).

*Students from Driggs Elementary School are thrilled during a swan release*



*R13 spotted on the Henry's Fork in 2018*



Each winter, thousands of Trumpeter Swans arrive from the Northern United States and Canada in search of food and shelter. You may wonder why we are working so hard to reintroduce nesting Trumpeters in the region. Eastern Idaho actually hosts over 60 percent of the entire Rocky Mountain Trumpeter Swan population each winter, with as many as 4,000 Trumpeters migrating here in search of open water and food. But, come spring, the vast majority of them return north to breed. Our project aims to bolster the population of Trumpeters breeding in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. If you are looking for a winter wildlife adventure, it is worth a trip to visit Deer Parks Wildlife Management Area to see the wintering swans!



# Fulfilling a Vision for the

## Protecting Wild and Working Lands



Teton Valley provides key habitat for a range of signature species of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, including Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, migrating waterbirds, raptors, neotropical songbirds, and mammals like mule deer and elk. The Teton Creek Corridor, which connects Grand Teton National Park with the Teton River, provides refuge for both year-round and migratory wildlife, including wintering elk. The conservation of Teton Creek has been a priority for the Land Trust for more than twenty-five years, starting with our first conservation easement near the confluence with the Teton River. We have continued to work with landowners and partners to complete over fifteen projects along the corridor that include the permanent protection of 1,100 acres and the restoration of three miles of in-stream and riparian habitat. A highlight of that restoration occurred along Six Springs Creek. This spring-fed system, originating near the Land Trust office, is one of the most productive spawning tributaries for native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, as well as home to abundant wildlife and an 850-acre working ranch.

## Partnering for a Greater Impact

The Land Trust joined the Teton Creek Collaborative (TCC), along with Friends of the Teton River, Teton Valley Trails and Pathways, and Valley Advocates for Responsible Development, to fulfill the vision put forth in the Teton County Comprehensive Plan. This vision aligned with the goals of the TCC, including habitat protection and restoration, farmland protection, a public pathway, and incentive-based options to reduce development. Since this collaboration began, we have made incredible progress, collectively achieving impressive results including in-stream restoration, permanent protection of over 200 acres, and the establishment of the pathway between Cemetery and Stateline Roads.



### LEGEND

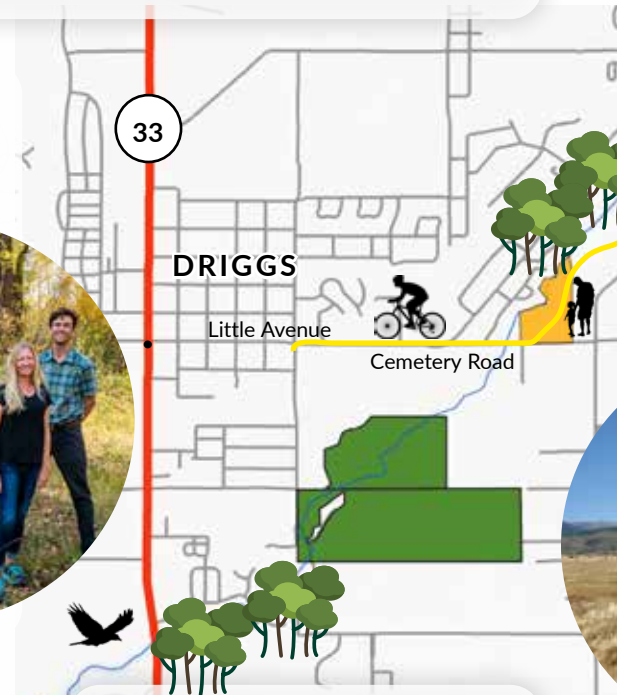
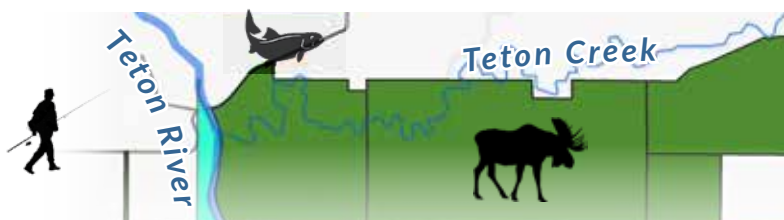
■ TRLT Conservation Easement

■ Bureau of Land Management

■ Teton County, Idaho

■ United States Forest Service

— Pathway



Six Springs Ranch is the home of the Teton Regional Land Trust office, as well as our first conservation easement, completed in 1995.



# The Teton Creek Corridor



## Pathway Update

Establishing the public pathway along Teton Creek has been years in the making. We started by working with the TCC partners to negotiate and establish public access easements through private property with willing landowners. Once that was accomplished, we set out to raise funds for pathway construction. This summer, the pathway was constructed going through Teton County's property and the Land Trust's land upstream of Cemetery Road. The partners are still working to raise the funds to connect it all the way to Stateline Road, but we are excited to share that the trail will be opening in 2021 once winter range closures are lifted in the spring. In working to balance habitat protection for wildlife with public access for our community, we sited the pathway along the bench and outside the creek corridor to provide safety and security for wildlife. The pathway will be closed during the winter to ensure animals, like the wintering elk, have a secure space free of disturbance during a critical time for their survival.



## Restoring Habitat, Saving Farmland, & Providing Access

In 2015, the Teton Creek Collaborative partners began taking a close look at what we could do together to achieve our collective goals between Cemetery and Stateline Roads. It is a balancing act and we have worked hard to incorporate the desire of our community to have the ability to access nature close to Driggs, while also protecting habitat for wildlife and sustaining open space and productive agricultural lands. The Teton Creek Farm acquisition is a great example of that balancing act in action. With the support of our partners and the LOR Foundation, the Land Trust purchased the farm through two acquisitions between 2015 and 2017. This purchase ensured the linkage of the pathway between Cemetery and Stateline Roads, provided the potential for habitat restoration along the corridor, and maintained a working farm. The result of this opportunity has been the removal of a homesite from within the corridor, restoration of more than forty acres of riparian and upland habitat, and the dedication of more than one hundred acres of farmland protected through a permanent conservation easement.



# 30th Anniversary Awards

HONORING THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE

- **Ed Hill Conservation Award**  
Conservation Easement Grantors
- **Collaboration Award**  
Snake River Conservation Partnership
- **Agency Leadership Award**  
North American Wetland Conservation Council
- **Business Support Award**  
Great Harvest Bread Co  
John and Tiffani Van Orman
- **Nonprofit Partner Award**  
Land Trust Alliance
- **Volunteer Appreciation Award**  
Wray and Lani Landon
- **Membership Appreciation Award**  
Toni Hill
- **Land Stewardship Award**  
Fox Creek Ranch
- **Board Service Award**  
Ron Rope (posthumous)
- **Staff Service Award**  
Tamara Sperber and Renee Hiebert
- **Heart and Soul Award**  
David Work

Learn more about the awards and the recipients on our website, [tetonlandtrust.org](http://tetonlandtrust.org).



*"The Alliance has been proud to be a Teton Regional Land Trust partner every step of the way. I am proud not just because of the honor you bestow on us, but because your land trust is exactly what a high performing land trust should look like and what we aspire to see across the nation."*

**– Andrew Bowman, President & CEO,  
Land Trust Alliance**



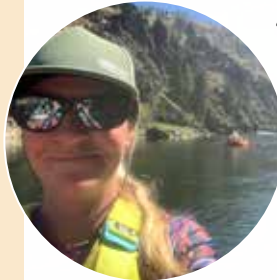
*"When I reflect back to when I started with the Land Trust, 14 years ago, I wanted to be involved with this organization because of my love for this landscape, its open spaces, and its wildlife. I've stayed because of the people—the dedicated staff and Board, the incredible landowners, our supportive members, and our committed partners. It's been an extraordinary experience seeing the organization grow over the years. I'm grateful that I've been able to be a part of it."*

**– Tamara Sperber, Conservation Director**



*"I appreciate knowing the conservation work we are doing is going to last forever. I grew up in Utah and when I go back, I see the places that I grew up in have changed. It is satisfying to know the work we do is permanent."*

**– John and Tiffani VanOrman**



*"To me, this job has always been about conserving this remarkable landscape and about the great landowners I get to meet and work with, which keeps it consistently interesting and rewarding. It feels gratifying to be a part of everything the land trust and its partners have accomplished over the last 15 years."*

**– Renee Hiebert, Conservation Specialist**



*"We partnered with the Land Trust because it was important to our family to protect the landscape in the long term for the integrity of our wildlife. Through the work of the Land Trust, our land is nestled amongst several other conservation easements, which really augments the habitat protection for the wildlife. One thing that has always impressed me about the Land Trust is the overall integrity of the organization. The Land Trust has high-quality staff that maintains long-term relationships with members of the community that bring new opportunities for conservation and to landowners like ourselves."*

**– Jeff Klausmann, Conservation Easement Landowner**

# Thank you to our 2020 Event Sponsors

## 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



### Gold Sponsors



TRIBUTARY

### Silver Sponsors



First American  
Title Company



Granite Creek Valuation  
Real Estate Appraisers & Consultants

### Bronze Sponsors



## 3RD ANNUAL GREATER YELLOWSTONE CRANE FESTIVAL

### Sponsors



Pattie & Earle Layser  
Memorial Trust



### Underwriters



Hamill Family Foundation

## WRUN FOR WRAY



*"When we started working on the Wrun for Wray Targhee Hill Climb back in January, we never anticipated having to cancel it in May for everyone's safety. We want to thank our numerous sponsors who were all lined up for this annual event—your continued support means so much! Hopefully, the event will take place again on June 26, 2021, pending Covid-19 conditions." - Lani and Wray Landon*



# Conservation in the Big Holes

## LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND AT WORK



Ever wonder about the pilings as you float the Teton River past the Horseshoe Bridge Access Site? They are actually the remnants of a railroad bridge built at the turn of the last century. The spur of the Oregon Short Line was built in 1917 and 1918 to connect the Big Bear Coalmine with the rail line in Teton. Prior to the construction of the rail line, the mine delivered high-grade coal to the region by wagon and sleigh. The town of Sam was established at what is now the main Horseshoe Canyon Trailhead. At one time, Sam was the largest “city” in Teton Valley with a population of over 3,000 people. The town had a movie house, store, school, post office, and other services. Following a series of operational and economic challenges, the mine closed down and the majority of the residents had moved on by 1936. Most people that visit the area today have no idea the trailhead was once a bustling townsite; the railroad tracks and buildings have been removed or burnt down.

One legacy of the mining operation was the private land that was a result of the mining claim. Altogether, the claim encompassed more than 1,200 acres surrounded by the Caribou-Targhee National Forest. Over time, the land has been split and sold. In 2002, the Land Trust worked with the Williams Family to place a conservation easement on 300 acres. In 2014, the remaining private land was bought by the Beartooth Group after the passing of Markita Maytag, heiress of the Maytag Company who had lived high up in the Big Holes for many years.

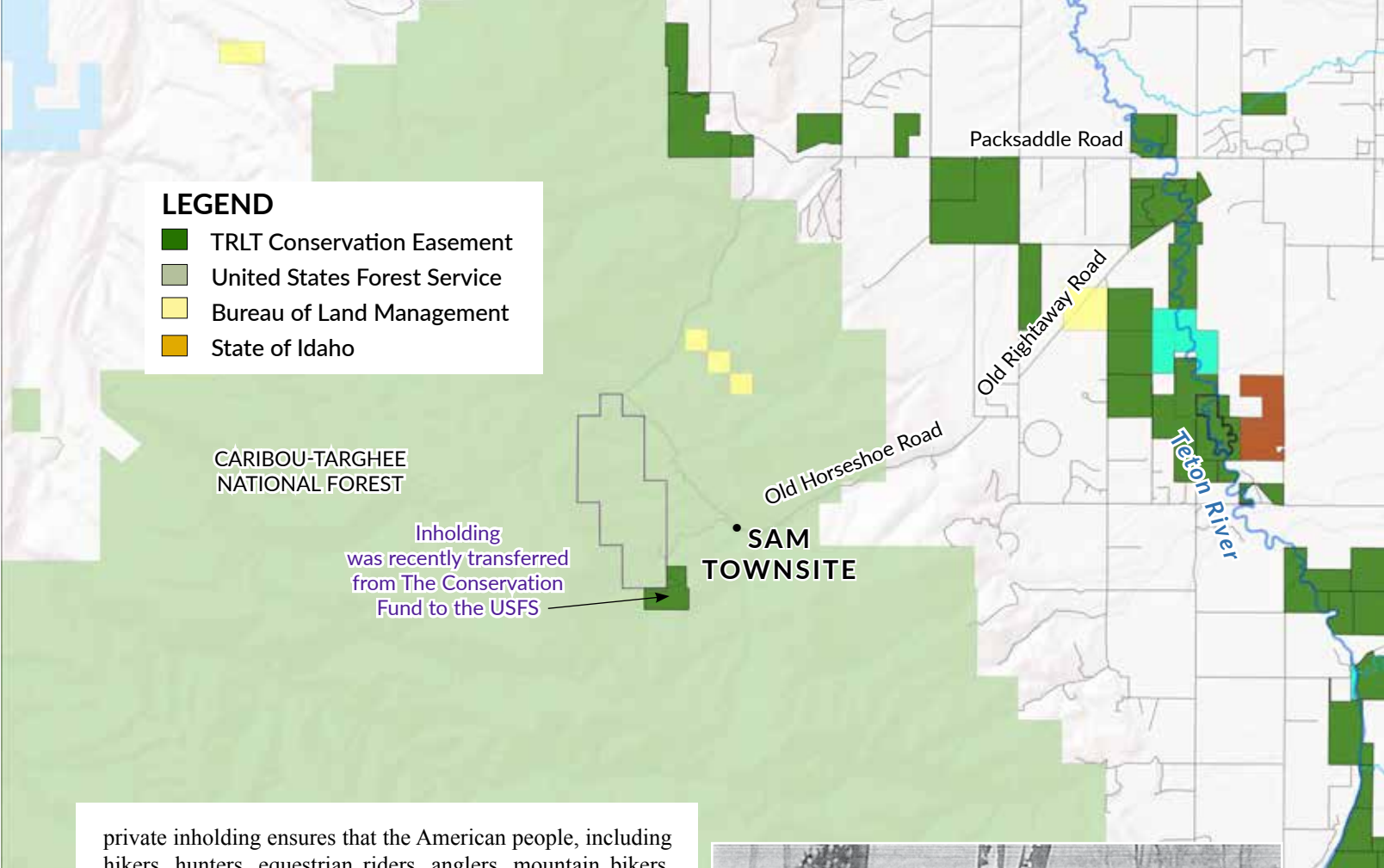


The property went up for sale in 2017 and The Conservation Fund, working with Beartooth Group and aided by the Teton Regional Land Trust, bought the land in April 2020. The Conservation Fund held the land until the Forest Service was able to buy it with federal allocation from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. “We started working with the Teton Regional Land Trust and The Conservation Fund before our acquisition of the Maytag-Teton Timbers property in 2014 on how to make such an outcome occur. It was truly a pleasure to be involved with this great group of partners in this wonderful transaction,” says Robert Keith, Founder and Managing Principal of Beartooth Group.

“The Maytag-Teton Timbers property is a prime example of LWCF working in a collaborative way,” says Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson. “Engaging with the local community and ensuring their needs were met was critical to the success of this project. I applaud the U.S. Forest Service and all the partners involved, for working diligently to accomplish this great project. When the Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law last month, I said this bill is for future generations.”

This project was a neat example of the Land and Water Conservation Fund in action, and since the Maytag-Teton Timbers property will open up public access for Idahoans for centuries to come, it’s also a great example of our work in action. The conservation of this

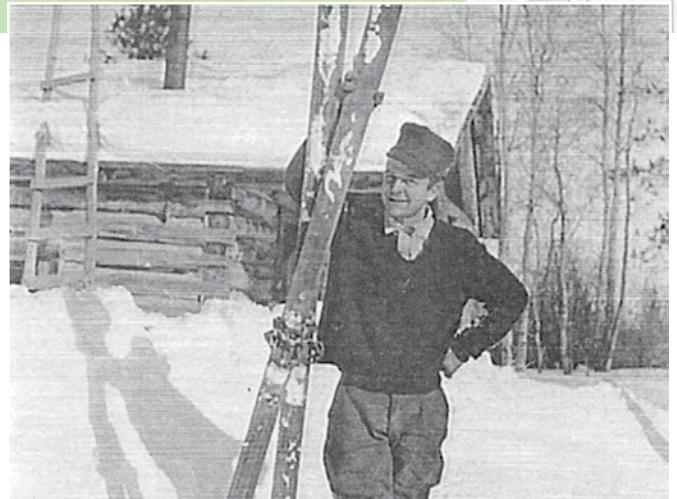




private inholding ensures that the American people, including hikers, hunters, equestrian riders, anglers, mountain bikers, snow sports enthusiasts, and others, will be able to explore and enjoy an additional 960 acres of public lands, eliminating concerns about possible trespass issues on the property.

“Partnerships and collaboration go a long way in making these important conservation projects viable,” says Mark Elsbree, western director and senior vice president at The Conservation Fund. “Securing the Maytag property for a community that highly values its public lands for wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities will have a lasting positive impact.”

The Teton Regional Land Trust is happy to have been a partner in this acquisition to incorporate the private inholding in the Big Hole Mountains into the Caribou-Targhee National Forest. This is a great outcome for the public and wildlife in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.



Left: Townsite of Sam.

Right, top: Residents endured long winters and built their own skis to travel to and from the mine.

Right, bottom: Sam was once the largest “city” in Teton Valley. The town had a school, store, and post office.

Thank you to the Teton Valley Historical Museum for the historical photos and information.



# Adopt-a-Box Volunteer Project

## BUILDING NEW HOMES FOR OUR FEATHERY RESIDENTS

Eastern Idaho is for the birds! We are lucky to have all sorts of birds in our region—some that are here year-round and others that are migratory. During the summer, we have raptors, like the Swainson's Hawk, that nest in our region before migrating to South America for the winter. The Rough-legged Hawk nests in the Arctic during the summer and spends the winter here. Our region is also home to a variety of cavity nesting birds. Cavity nesters are birds that rely on a nesting shelter, like a hole in a tree, to build their nests. There are two kinds of cavity nesting birds—primary and secondary cavity nesters. Woodpeckers are examples of primary cavity nesters because they excavate their own holes. Secondary cavity nesting birds, such as the Mountain Bluebird and the Tree Swallow, utilize abandoned cavities from other birds, or they can use human-created bird boxes.

Speaking of bird boxes, perhaps you have wondered about all the bird boxes north of the road that leads to the Rainey Bridge/Big Eddy Access area. Land Trust members Christine Paige and Tobin Kelley began to wonder about them, too, and took a closer look last fall. Turns out, the array of about twenty bird boxes were left over from a past study of nesting Tree Swallows conducted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Christine and Tobin cleaned out and repaired what they could and reached out to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and

the Land Trust to see if more could be done to encourage not only Tree Swallows but also Mountain Bluebirds to nest.

Through this effort, the Adopt-a-Box Volunteer Project began. This fall, volunteers with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game built bluebird boxes and twenty swallow boxes. The primary difference between the two bird boxes is that the bluebirds require a slightly bigger entry hole. We were able to install more swallow boxes in the area because research shows that bluebird boxes should be at least 300 feet apart. Mountain Bluebirds are highly territorial, whereas Tree Swallows are less territorial and may actually prefer nesting close to other Tree Swallows, so their boxes can be just 35 feet apart.

This fall we kicked off our new Adopt-a-Box Volunteer Project by installing the boxes on the Idaho Department of Fish and Game land at the Rainey Creek Access, according to the guidance of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch program guidelines. Our volunteers "adopted" specific boxes at the site that they will monitor this spring and summer and record occupancy and activity. After any nestlings fledge, the volunteers will clean out the boxes so they are ready for the next spring. In 2021 we will be expanding the program, so reach out to the Land Trust if you are interested in joining our Adopt-a-Box crew.

### Why Do We Capitalize the Common Names of Birds and Fish?

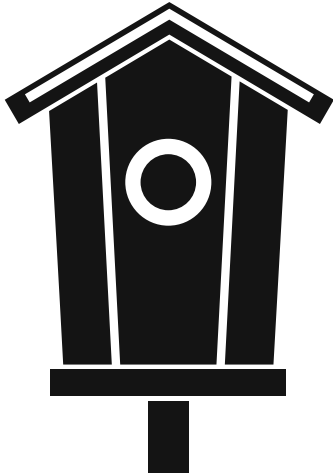
While the overall rule of thumb for capitalizing plant and wildlife species is only to capitalize proper nouns—for example blue spruce and Douglas-fir—birds and fish do not follow this rule. Both professional and recreational birders, as well as by the American Fisheries Society, capitalize the common names—for example, Bald Eagle and Rainbow Trout. This convention is not used by botanists or other fields of ecological study.



# Building Your Own Bird Box

## Features of a Good Birdhouse

Visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Nest Watch Website ([nestwatch.org](http://nestwatch.org)) for a great infographic on how to build a good birdhouse. To ensure a safe and successful home for a cavity nesting bird, make sure:



- ✎ It is well-constructed with untreated wood and galvanized screws;
- ✎ It keeps birds dry with a sloped roof, recessed floor, and drainage holes;
- ✎ It helps regulate temperature with thick walls and ventilation holes;
- ✎ It keeps predators out by ensuring no perches and appropriate placement;
- ✎ It has the right sized entrance hole for the right bird;
- ✎ It helps fledglings leave the nest with rough interior walls; and
- ✎ Its location makes maintenance easy.



## Mountain Bluebird - *Sialia currucoides*

The Mountain Bluebird is the state bird of Idaho. Members of the thrush family, bluebirds usually forage from perches, but they are also excellent aerial hunters and will hover and strike at flying insects. During the breeding season, Mountain Bluebirds seek out open areas with a mix of short grasses, shrubs, and trees. They seem to prefer dry cavities with entrances oriented away from approaching storms, roads, and other high human activity areas. They lay three to eight plain, pale bluish-white eggs, and a mated pair of Mountain Bluebirds will produce one to two broods per year. Mountain Bluebirds eat mostly insects—beetles, grasshoppers, and caterpillars—as well as spiders. In winter they go after small fruits, seeds, and insects when available. Bird boxes placed in suitable habitat have also provided a population boost to these colorful harbingers of spring! Learn more and listen to their song at: [allaboutbirds.org/guide/Mountain\\_Bluebird/overview](http://allaboutbirds.org/guide/Mountain_Bluebird/overview).



## Tree Swallow - *Tachycineta bicolor*

Tree Swallows are small acrobatic songbirds with long, pointed wings and a forked tail. They use their short, flat bills to feed on small insects during their adept and darting flight and play an important role in insect pest control for surrounding areas. Tree Swallows gather in large flocks to molt and migrate. In the non-breeding season, they form huge, tightly choreographed communal roosts. They are among the first birds to arrive in spring and are very entertaining to watch! Tree Swallows nest in fields, meadows, and wetland borders where they can readily find an abundance of flying insects. Breeding can start as soon as early May. The female incubates four to seven pure white eggs for around 14 to 15 days. Chicks generally fledge about 18 to 22 days after hatching. Swallows and bluebirds will nest within the same range and are beneficial and fun to have around. Learn more about Tree Swallows and listen to their songs at: [allaboutbirds.org/guide/Tree\\_Swallow/id](http://allaboutbirds.org/guide/Tree_Swallow/id).

# Expanding Wetland Protection

## SECURING IMPORTANT HABITAT AND WORKING LANDS



*Springtime at Spring Creek Wetland*

This fall, we increased the protection of a large wetland complex just upstream of the confluence of Spring Creek and North Leigh Creek in Teton. Spring Creek Ranch is a mix of wetlands and spring creeks surrounded by sagebrush-covered hills. The new conservation easement adds to an ongoing conservation effort in the area that started back in 2004 with the Petzoldt Preserve, a twenty-acre parcel protected for its wetland habitat. In 2015, the Land Trust protected an additional 180 acres adjacent to the Petzoldt Preserve. The property was purchased because of the valuable wetlands that provide habitat for five Sandhill Crane nests and important fall roosting habitat for staging Sandhill Cranes. The uplands also provide critical winter range for elk and moose.

The new conservation easement completed in September added 110 acres of conserved land to the existing 200 acres already protected and expands habitat protection for native plants,

fish, and wildlife, including “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” as outlined in the Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan. Species that will benefit from the protected habitat include Ferruginous Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Northern Leopard Frog, Common Nighthawk, Trumpeter Swan, Short-eared Owl, and Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse. This land is used year-round by wildlife, including wintering elk and nesting and staging Sandhill Cranes in the summer and fall.

“It is great to see the sensitive habitat of the Spring Creek marsh complex further protected. This was a fairly complex project that required a lot of pieces to come together. Fortunately, we work with a lot of incredible people whose patience, support, passion, and expertise made it happen. I hope the cranes and big game continue to benefit from the habitat here for many generations to come,” says Josh Holmes, Land Protection Specialist.





The majority of the Sandhill Cranes that stage in eastern Idaho each fall spend the winter at Bosque del Apache where this photo was taken



# Crazy for Cranes

## CONNECTING SANDHILLS WITH OUR COMMUNITY

The 3rd Annual Greater Yellowstone Crane Festival looked a little different this year, but was still a fun and successful community event! We celebrated the Sandhill Crane migration and the exceptional natural and agricultural resources of eastern Idaho, raising awareness about efforts to conserve critical habitat for cranes and other iconic species of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

During Crane Fest 2020, we offered diverse virtual programming and themes related to Sandhill Cranes that were accessible through email, our Facebook page, and our website. The online segments included a feature on cranes in culture—the historic and global context—and featured a dance performance by Idaho Falls School of Ballet and poetry readings by Matt Daly and Laurie Kutchins. We had an informational and engaging presentation by Land Trust staff, Joselin Matkins and Tamara Sperber, about staging cranes in Teton Valley and our work to protect their habitat. One of our favorite elements, the crane art sculptures, were once again beautifully decorated and donated by artists and community members. New elements this year included an online art auction and an online “People’s Choice” voting option for the Crane Art Sculptures. We also debuted a virtual Cranes in the Classroom educational presentation.

Here at Teton Regional Land Trust, we know that the children are our future! As part of our ongoing efforts to educate and connect kids to nature, we started an elementary school program in 2019 all about Greater Sandhill Cranes. “Cranes in

the Classroom” started (and will resume) inside elementary school classrooms throughout the valley. We were excited to offer a virtual option this year that parents, teachers, and other educators from across the region could easily and safely present to their students. We provided a script and recorded a visual and educational lesson about cranes and their habitat. The success of this effort got us thinking. Why not create more virtual lesson modules for our community and beyond?

As a result, we are redesigning and adding to our beloved Teacher Trunks to loan out to educators in order to engage our youngest community members in the amazing natural world that surrounds us. We are developing a curriculum that will expand on the knowledge from the previous year and will include lessons on wildlife, winter ecology, and ecosystems. We are also updating our Woods Creek Fenn trunk for middle schoolers. Not only will our easy-to-transport trunks contain replica animal parts and information, but each trunk will also include links to a virtual presentation, relevant books, poetry or maps, an art or design project, Spanish translation, and recommended field trips and activities. Educators will be able to check out each trunk and return it when their lesson is completed. We hope to provide fun and

meaningful information in a variety of ways to meet students and teachers’ individual needs. Thanks to the Community Foundation of Teton Valley’s Youth Philanthropy Program, we received our first grant to develop the materials. If you are interested in supporting this program, please reach out to Hilary Ordonez at [hilary@tetonlandtrust.org](mailto:hilary@tetonlandtrust.org).



*Sam and Beezie Ordonez measure their “wingspans” as part of the Cranes in the Classroom program*

### Teton Teacher Trunks and Virtual Presentations

Look for information in an upcoming e-newsletter and check our website for the debut of our new trunks, starting with Winter Ecology. Trunks will be available for a 72-hour checkout and will be thoroughly cleaned between each user. All of our virtual presentations can be found on our website, starting with Cranes in the Classroom. More will be added throughout the year. For more information, please email Hilary Ordonez at [hilary@tetonlandtrust.org](mailto:hilary@tetonlandtrust.org).

# Innovative Conservation Easement Stewardship

## A NEW WAY TO LOOK AT THE LAND

Land protection and stewardship are the foundation of Teton Regional Land Trust's conservation mission. Working with willing landowners to place a conservation easement on private land is the first step to lasting protection and partnership, and while we are always looking to protect the next family farm or critical migration corridor, a large part of our work each year is focused on ensuring the integrity of the 166 conservation easements we steward annually. Our stewardship program is governed by board-adopted policies and procedures that integrate Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices. These guiding principles ensure that we fulfill our commitments to landowners, preserve the integrity of our easements, and uphold the public trust.

Ask our stewardship staff and they will tell you that our annual site visit to your conservation easement property is arguably one of the best parts of their job. Meeting with landowners and walking the ground they chose to protect and steward is an invaluable piece of our stewardship program and offers us the opportunity to build relationships and get to know our partner landowners and their land. However, due to the challenges of the pandemic, we have decided to do our annual site visits a bit differently this year. The Land Trust utilizes satellite imagery to conduct some of our annual site visits from space. While we are disappointed we aren't able to connect with all of our landowners in person this year, we hope that incorporating this new technology will not only ensure we are fulfilling our obligation to monitor our conservation easements, but will also give us a new perspective.

The Land Trust has worked with Upstream Tech, a satellite imagery procurement company, that specializes in land conservation and works with a multitude of land trusts across the U.S. The imagery collected enables us to look at areas that are harder to reach by foot, and gives us a comprehensive view of a property as opposed to the limited view we have on the ground. Upstream Tech offers a platform called Lens™, which is a specialized imagery review platform that enables us to translate data and look at different values on the landscape.

*"While we would much rather be on the ground meeting with landowners in person this year, the ability to view current high-resolution satellite imagery and compare it to previous years has given us a new perspective of properties and has enabled us to view areas that are harder to reach on foot every year. We are grateful to the Wray Landon Legacy Fund for making this innovative stewardship opportunity possible in 2020."*

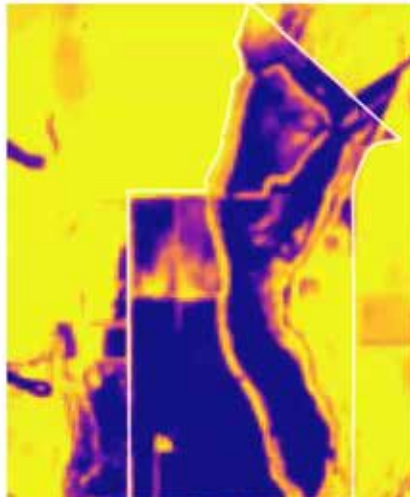
*- Kimberly Holmes, Stewardship Coordinator*

Through Lens™, we are able to detect changes in vegetation health and cover, changes in hydrology, and ensure the boundaries of our conservation easement properties are not being encroached upon. Remote monitoring will not eliminate the need for field visits, but we are excited to explore how utilizing new technology can improve the quality of our conservation easement monitoring program.

## See the landscape through different "lenses"



Truecolor (Visible Light)



Water (NDWI)



Vegetation (NDVI)



# Letter from our Board President

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE



John enjoying time with his granddaughters

From the seat of my tractor, this fall looked about the same as any other gorgeous fall in eastern Idaho. But when I turn on the TV or look at a newspaper, it is clear that 2020 is likely to look a whole lot better in the rearview mirror. This year, the Land Trust faced many of the same challenges faced by other businesses and nonprofits. I am happy to report that our professional staff and dedicated board met those challenges, keeping us on track and continuing the business of land protection and stewardship.

The Land Trust board has been managing its oversight function remotely, and despite the challenges this presented, I am pleased to welcome three new members to our board. Phyllis Hockett of Salt Lake City and Swan Valley, Laura Pickard of Ashton, and Bruce Mincher of Idaho Falls bring a wealth of experience and passion to the organization. You can learn more about them in this newsletter and read their biographies on our website. As we welcomed them to their first board meetings, held via Zoom, I reflected on my first board meeting over nine years ago. I remember looking around the room thinking, “I’m never going to fit in here.” There were scientists, lawyers, doctors, financial experts, successful businessmen and women and then me, the owner/operator of a

small to medium size farm operation in Fremont County, Idaho. As I got to know the board members, I realized that the background that mattered most was our common passion for the work of the Land Trust. Our experiences and interests benefit the Land Trust, bringing a variety of perspectives to the table.

I have come to regard every member of the staff and board as friends and as part of a larger family that cares deeply about this part of the world and the Land Trust’s work to protect it. I am reminded of the saying, “it takes a village to raise a child.” Similarly, I think it takes a village or a community to raise a land trust. We wouldn’t be where we are today without the involvement of many. I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our staff, our board, and our family of dedicated and generous supporters who have made it possible for us to stay strong and ready to face whatever comes in the months and years ahead. – John Nedrow, Board President

## Welcome to the Board



**PHYLLIS HOCKETT**  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH &  
SWAN VALLEY, IDAHO

*Conserving our farms, ranches, and wildlife habitats is critically important to retaining the culture and environment of eastern Idaho, and for the entire American West. Joining the board offers an opportunity to put this aspiration into action.*



**LAURA PICKARD**  
ASHTON, IDAHO

*Farms and ranches are the backbone of this country. By protecting the land that is the heart of all agriculture, we are preserving open spaces, wildlife habitat, water quality, and the overall beauty of the area. I am here to be a tiny part of that puzzle in the hope that I can make a difference for future generations.*



**BRUCE MINCHER**  
IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO

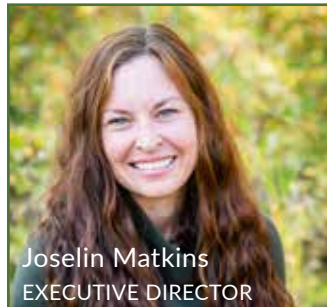
*Protecting habitat is the single most important thing we can do for wildlife and nobody does that better than Teton Regional Land Trust.*

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT  
OUR BOARD MEMBERS,  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE.**

TETON REGIONAL LAND TRUST  
1520 SOUTH 500 WEST  
PO BOX 247  
DRIGGS, ID 83422



**From All the Staff and Board, We Wish  
You Warm and Healthy Holidays!**



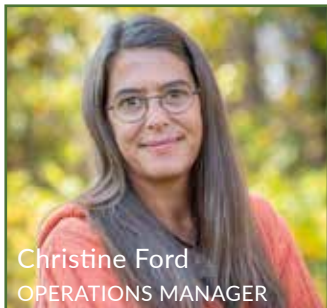
**Joselin Matkins**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



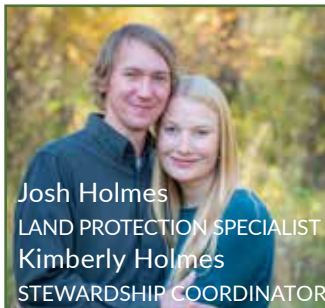
**Jeske Gräve**  
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



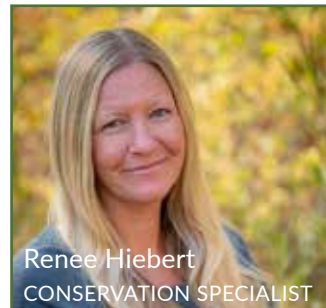
**Tamara Sperber**  
CONSERVATION DIRECTOR



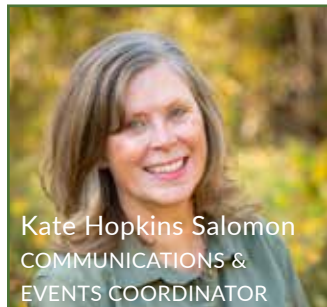
**Christine Ford**  
OPERATIONS MANAGER



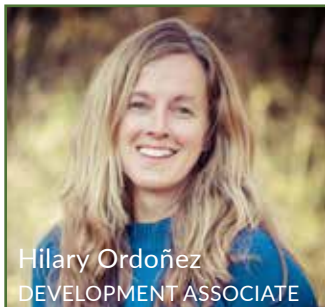
**Josh Holmes**  
LAND PROTECTION SPECIALIST  
**Kimberly Holmes**  
STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR



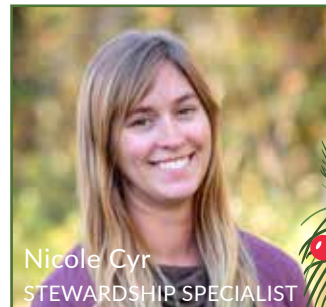
**Renee Hiebert**  
CONSERVATION SPECIALIST



**Kate Hopkins Salomon**  
COMMUNICATIONS &  
EVENTS COORDINATOR



**Hilary Ordoñez**  
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE



**Nicole Cyr**  
STEWARDSHIP SPECIALIST

#### PAST BOARD MEMBERS

Lonnie Allen, Dennis Aslett, Glen Atchley, Emma Atchley, Lynn Bagley, Richard Beesley, Don Betts, Jan Betts, David Breckenridge, Kane Brightman, Jaydell Buxton, Jeanne Marie Callahan, Dr. James Cecil, Janet Conway, Ron Cordes, Liz Davy, Harold Dunn, Ken Dunn, Frank Felton, Lou Gaylord, Dan Gerber, Jamie Greene, Gary Grigg, Ed Hill, Tom Hill, Tim Hopkins, Beach Huntsman, Nancy Huntsman, Glenn Janss, Jeff Klausmann, Amy Lientz, Debbie McGregor, Martin McLellan, Connie Mohr, Heidi Nelson, Brett Novik, Jon Prahasto, Jerry Reese, David Reinke, Chuck Rice, Dave Richardson, Ron Rope, Frank Russo, Dave Rydallch, Gene Sewell, David Shipman, Rick Sitts, Steve Smart, Catherine Smith, Gloria Smith, Susan Steinman, Albert Tilt, Ned Twining, Glenn Vitucci, Michael Whitfield, Meredith Wilson, and Delbert Winterfeld.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**John Nedrow, President**  
*Farmer | Ashton, Idaho*

**Arantza Zabala, Vice President**  
*Retired Idaho National Laboratory Human Resource Manager | Victor, Idaho*

**Bonnie Self, Treasurer**  
*Grant Writer | Alta, Wyoming*

**John Van Orman, Secretary**  
*Entrepreneur | Swan Valley, Idaho*

**Mike Allen**  
*Attorney | Swan Valley, Idaho*

**Robin Anderson**  
*Retired Financial Advisor | Teton, Idaho*

**Tim Brockish**  
*Small Business Owner | Rexburg, Idaho*

**Jean Crabtree**  
*Retired Otolaryngologist | Alta, Wyoming*

**Bill Graham, Past President**  
*Entrepreneur | Kenilworth, Illinois & Teton Valley*

**Phyllis Hockett**  
*Founding Partner, Pathway Associates | Salt Lake City, Utah & Swan Valley, Idaho*

**Wes Keller**  
*Retired Physician | Salt Lake City, Utah*

**Bob Lugar, Finance Committee Chair**  
*Financial Advisor | Rigby, Idaho*

**Matt MacMillan**  
*Real Estate Broker | Jackson, Wyoming*

**Paul Merrill**  
*Financial Advisor | Victor, Idaho*

**Bruce J. Mincher**  
*Retired Scientist | Idaho Falls, Idaho*

**Laura Pickard**  
*Farmer | Ashton, Idaho*

**Timothy Reynolds**  
*Ecologist | Rigby, Idaho*

**Karen Rice, Conservation Committee Chair**  
*Retired BLM Associate District Manager | Idaho Falls, Idaho*

**Bill Rogers**  
*Retired Chemist/Chemical Engineer | Idaho Falls and Teton Valley, Idaho*

**David Work, Development Committee Chair**  
*Retired Executive | Victor, Idaho*

#### BOARD EMERITUS

**Susan Lykes**  
**Linda Merigliano**  
**Lew Mithun**  
**Dean Scofield**

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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.

