

PHOTO: BACKGROUND, KIMBERLY HOLMES

A Note from our Executive Director



After emerging from a long winter, the Land Trust office is buzzing with events, volunteer days, landowner meetings, and fieldwork. We've loved meeting new people and seeing old friends at Land Trust events throughout our region. As soon as the snow melted, we celebrated a new conservation easement generously donated by Debbie and David Fosdick. The 183-acre property north of Tetonia permanently safeguards important habitat for a mule deer population that migrates from Grand Teton National Park to the Sand Creek area. And the "Stew Crew"—our stewardship team—is monitoring more than 170 properties that conserve nearly 40,000 acres in eastern Idaho, helping remove or repair fences, improve habitat, and control noxious weeds.

Conservation projects are also underway. By the time you read this, we hope to have announced another easement that will conserve important farmland and Sandhill Crane habitat. Building upon this momentum, we are excited to be helping a local farming family conserve farmland, habitat, and

scenic views from a popular trail. These are just two of more than a dozen projects totaling close to 18,000 acres that our staff has engaged in recently.

To conserve our region's most important places, we need to work at a scale and pace that matters. So last year, when the Hamill Family Foundation challenged the Land Trust and our members to meet an ambitious matching donation, we called on you to help. Together, we met the match and completed our Legacy of Land capital campaign. *Thank you* to all of you who increased your support to have a lasting impact on private land conservation.

But we aren't done yet. Inspired by your commitment and vision for conservation in eastern Idaho, the Hamill Family Foundation offered a second fundraising challenge that we need your help to meet in 2023. Humbled by their belief in our work, we are reaching back out to you to invest in conservation in eastern Idaho. Every additional dollar you give to the Land Trust will be doubled by the Hamill Family Foundation—up to \$250,000! We hope that this match compels you to double your impact to conserve the wild and working lands we hold so dearly. This opportunity comes at a critical time as the pressure on our landscape and the costs of conservation increase, but our mission remains the same: to protect land in eastern Idaho in perpetuity.

In 2023, we are also initiating an extensive strategic business planning process that will identify our most important priorities for the next four years. As part of the process, many of you shared your vision for eastern Idaho and the Land Trust. We heard your priorities—protect wildlife habitat and water (agriculture, riparian corridors, and wetlands) and practice durable conservation by being responsible stewards of perpetual easements. We will continue to focus on these priorities in our next plan, and we appreciate hearing from you.

As we move into this next chapter, we also see opportunities for additional board participation. At the end of 2023, we will have a number of board vacancies. We are seeking new board members around our region that represent a diversity of ages, experiences, and skills. If you are personally interested in joining our Teton Regional Land Trust Board of Directors or you would like to recommend someone who is passionate about conservation, please call me directly to discuss this opportunity. Interested parties will meet with board leadership by July 15.

In the meantime, we hope to see you at one of our events this summer so that we get the chance to thank you for your support in person. We truly appreciate your commitment to conserving vulnerable lands in eastern Idaho.

Thank you,

Kim Trotter

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

PHOTOS: BACKGROUND, LINDA M. SWOPE; MIDDLE, KIT WEITNAUER; BOTTOM: NICOLE CYR

Remembering Ruth Shea and Rod Drewien

By Kim Trotter, Executive Director







This spring, we lost a long-time partner and friend who influenced the Teton Regional Land Trust's conservation efforts for more than three decades. Ruth Shea was best known as the preeminent Trumpeter Swan biologist who spent her life studying and advocating for the Rocky Mountain Tri-State Trumpeter Swan population. As her long-time friend and colleague Mark Gamblin said, "Ruth was the tip of the spear for the multi-government agency, private organization, and public partnership that resulted in the recovery and expansion of Trumpeters in Idaho and contiguous western states. Without Ruth's combination of coalition building skills, commitment and drive, we would not enjoy this wildlife conservation success today."

Ruth created a network of land and wildlife stewards to improve the quality of swan nesting habitat, and she advised the Teton Regional Land Trust when we began introducing cygnets to establish breeding pairs of Trumpeter Swans in Teton Valley. Ruth had been writing a book to compile more than forty years of Trumpeter Swan research.

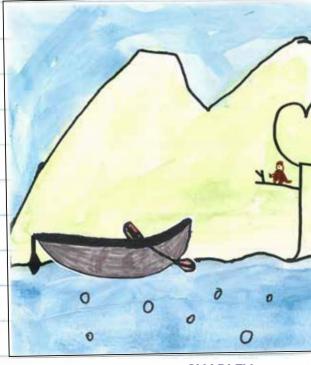
Ruth's husband, Rod Drewien, was also a prominent migratory bird biologist, who passed away in 2021. Ruth established the Rod Drewien Crane Conservation Fund with the Teton Regional Land Trust in his memory. We will miss their adventurous spirits, extensive knowledge, and unbound passion for the migratory birds of eastern Idaho. Ruth's sisters have asked that gifts in memory of Ruth be made to the Teton Regional Land Trust's Teton Basin Trumpeter Swan Project.

About the Teton Basin Trumpeter Swan Project:

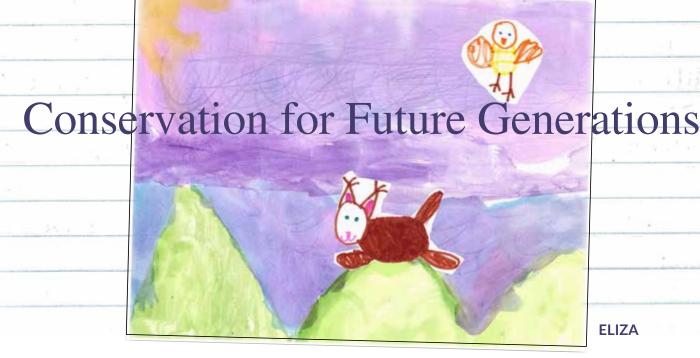
The successes of Teton Regional Land Trust's wetland protection and restoration program, combined with Teton Basin's strategic location, have created a unique opportunity to reestablish Trumpeter Swan nesting in Teton Valley and enhance Trumpeter nesting throughout the Greater Yellowstone region.

Since 2013, the Land Trust has teamed up with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Wyoming Wetlands Society, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Trumpeter Swan Society, and local landowners to release Trumpeter Swans onto protected wetlands in an attempt to establish breeding pairs and increase summer residency in Teton Valley. The swans wear green neck collars or leg bands with white lettering, and over the years swan monitoring volunteers have reported numerous Trumpeter sightings. To submit an observation or to support the project in memory of Ruth, please visit *tetonlandtrust.org* and find the Trumpeter Swan Project on our Conserve page.



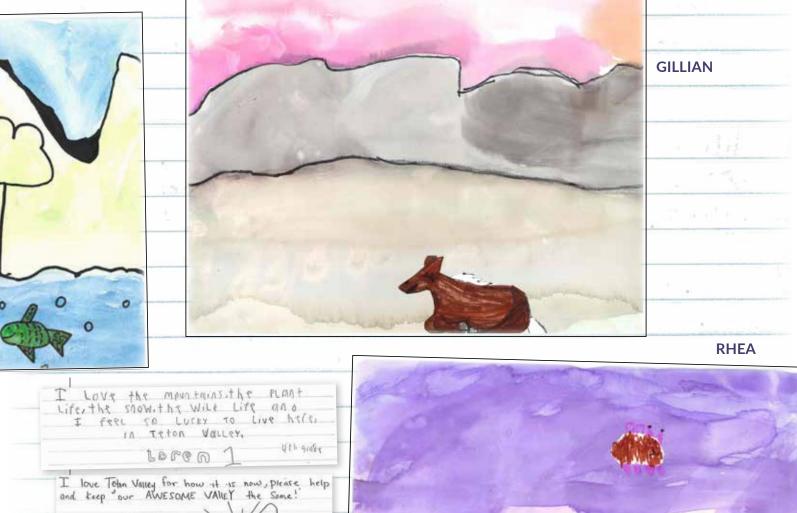


IZZY CHARLEY



The mission of Teton Regional Land Trust is vast and ambitious. As our staff works every day, it can be easy to focus on what we do: Helping landowners protect vulnerable lands that fall under our strategic conservation priorities. But just as important is why we do this work. There are many answers to that question. We do it to help farmers and ranchers keep agricultural lands in active production and in their family. We do it to keep wildlife migratory pathways connected and key habitat viable. And we do it to preserve iconic views for the community to enjoy. But when boiled down further, the best answer to the question of why we do this work, and why our members support it, is found in our mission statement: We do it for future generations.

Due to the nature of conservation easements, our primary tool, the lands we conserve will be protected in perpetuity. Because of this commitment, we have a responsibility to plan for the long-term. At the same time, we have the privilege to know that future generations will see the benefits of our work here in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. From future farmers and ranchers to future mule deer fawns and Sandhill Crane colts, our work helps ensure that all species will grow up in a natural environment with access to clean water, clean air, and a healthy and thriving ecosystem.



I love Tehn Valley for how it is now, please help and keep our AWESOME VAlley the Some!

P.S. Thank you so much for Protecting our beautiful, wild Valley Teten Land Trust!

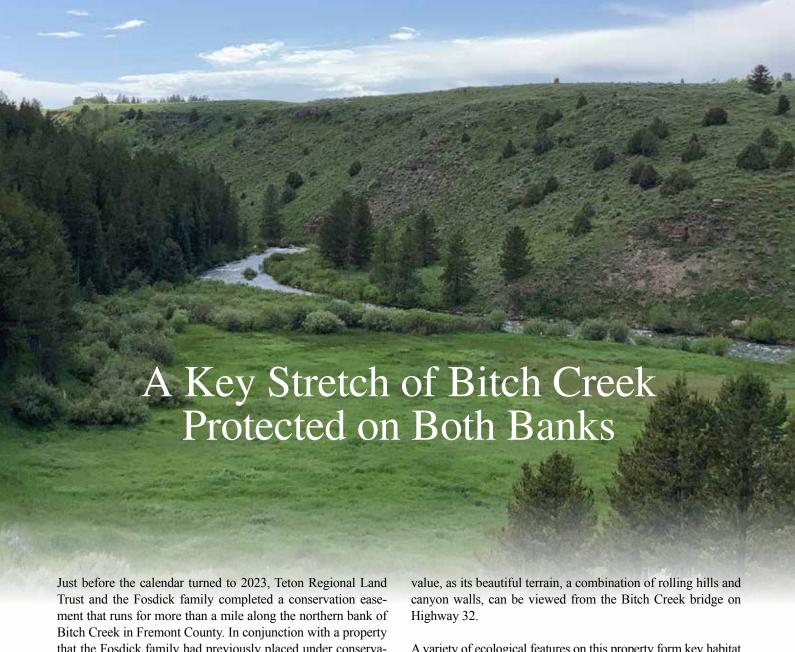
Heiri a reasy cool story: once it was mate last year and we looked outside and soil a vindential ion consing cours; the cours are fine but soils proppe don't like access to that outside their occors.

Meany M Rober grows a be quitiful amount of wildlife like moose, front, bears etc. We have an amazing place colled the tetan River It's a lovely place were you can flow down and see animals and wonderful Plants.

Lainey B Jablow grade 7 oct-27-22

From elementary students like these to families who have been in eastern Idaho for generations, we all have a stake in the future of this landscape. When future generations set foot in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, what do you hope that they see? By supporting Teton Regional Land Trust, you are helping make that future a reality. Thank you!

With this in mind, we wanted to know what the next generation of east Idahoans think of the part of the world we call home. We reached out to students at Teton Science School's Mountain Academy in Victor and The Learning Academy in Driggs, and asked them that question. Their artwork and written responses unearthed some common themes. Many of them voiced a desire for Teton Valley to remain much as it is now. They understand that these landscapes are unique, and know that not all kids are lucky enough to experience them. They also share an admiration for wildlife and understand the need to keep their habitat viable. Above all else, these students love the place they live.



that the Fosdick family had previously placed under conservation easement along the south bank of the creek, this results in both sides of Bitch Creek being protected in perpetuity along this key stretch.

"Since coming to Teton Valley in 1988 we knew that this was a place that we wanted to be a part of and preserve," said Debbie Fosdick. "To have a conservation easement in place to protect the property, waters, and wildlife corridors gives us the assurance that this protection is in place. With the possibility of increasing development, David and I knew that putting the additional acreage located in Fremont County under easement was important. To have both sides of that part of the Bitch Creek corridor in a conservation easement will help ensure preservation of what we both value. Hopefully, other landowners will join us."

Several factors give this property significant conservation value. In addition to bordering the Fosdicks' first easement, it also lies in close proximity to other conserved private and public lands to the west and south. Part of the property is dry farmed in barley, lending it agricultural value, and the land has scenic A variety of ecological features on this property form key habitat for many species. Vegetation along the steep canyon slopes includes dense conifer and juniper, while the rolling terrain above contains a mixture of sagebrush, bitterbrush, aspen, and grasslands. These vegetative communities provide forage and open space for migrating big game including moose, white-tailed deer, and mule deer. Mule deer migrating west over the Teton Mountains into Idaho specifically rely on the area along Bitch Creek for migration and wintering habitat. Many raptor species such as Bald and Golden Eagles, as well as multiple bat species utilize the rocky canyon walls that span the edge of the property leading down to the creek. The presence of multiple grouse leks in the area indicates that the property is a breeding ground for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Finally, native Yellowstone cutthroat trout in Bitch Creek will benefit from its protection.

"We are grateful to the landowners for generously conserving over a mile of both sides of the Bitch Creek canyon, protecting the area not only for wildlife and agriculture, but also for spectacular scenic views," said Conservation Project Manager Renee Hiebert.



Pieces of the Puzzle: The Importance of Private Land Conservation for Natural Wildlife Movement

By Will Roth
Development and Communications Associate

At the Land Trust, one of the conservation priorities that our land protection team looks for in a possible project is proximity to other protected lands, whether they are public or private.

This is for good reason. Private land conservation is not just beneficial but necessary in order for an entire landscape to function naturally, in conjunction with

public lands people can access for recreation. If property bordering public land is developed extensively or obtrusively, there will be negative impacts to the ecological health on both sides of the boundary. One of the most clear examples of this is with wildlife movement. Private land conservation is a key piece of the puzzle that allows for wildlife to move naturally through the habitats they've evolved to thrive in.

According to a 2023 survey conducted by Colorado College, 93 percent of voters in the Mountain West believe it is important to conserve wildlife habitat and migration routes. At the Land Trust, we are heartened to see such overwhelming support for this crucial issue, as protection of wildlife habitat is a core tenet of our mission. By partnering with willing landowners, we are uniquely positioned to protect private land that wildlife utilizes, either for seasonal migration or daily movement.

What makes a good wildlife migration path? It can best be defined by what it doesn't have: human-made features. This general term can refer to gas fields, air strips, and of course homes and roads, but most commonly, fences are what have a negative effect on migration paths. According to the Wildlife Management Institute, a mule deer fitted with a tracking collar named Deer 255 crosses nearly 200 fences annually along her 240-mile migration route between the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the Red Desert in Wyoming. As fence ecology expert Christine Paige points out, "Animals haven't evolved with this."

In the documentary Deer 139, which features three women following in the footsteps of a migrating mule deer known as Deer 139, expedition leader Sam Dwinnell reflects on the importance of conservation when her team encounters yet another fence to navigate.

"Habitats can't be considered in isolation," Dwinnell says. "There is a purpose for each of the habitats that [the animals] use along their path. Making sure that we connect those landscapes is so critical for the survival of the population."

The importance of private land conservation becomes even more clear when considering that wildlife habitat and desirable property usually have one thing in common: proximity to water.

"Humans like to develop in the valleys where we have access to water, where it's flat so we can build and move around easily," said Renee Seidler, the executive director of the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation. "But that's the most important habitat for most species of wildlife. If we weren't conserving private lands, which are predominantly down in the valleys, then these animals wouldn't be able to make it from summer range to winter range or to breeding habitat, because oftentimes they're either utilizing those lands seasonally or they're needing to cross them to get from one piece of public land to another. And if you truncate that by building up private lands in whatever way—putting up impermeable fences, building big neighborhoods with no greenway value or open space for animals to move through—then you're going to lose those animals. Animals have to move."

Animals have been using ancient movement routes since well before humans arrived on this landscape. Some are fairly adaptable to changes in their environment, but most are not. Private land conservation is important to maintain a naturally functioning ecosystem that includes wildlife moving as freely as possible along their instinctual routes. It is the piece of the puzzle that will allow all inhabitants to enjoy this landscape as it is meant to be, now and in the future.



IN A LANDSCAPE Sponsors

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SIX SPRINGS RANCH WILL BE THE BACKDROP FOR THIS YEAR'S PERFORMANCE

Classical music and nature go perfectly together. Thankfully, on August 2, IN A LANDSCAPE: Classical Music in the Wild™ will return to Teton Valley for a third summer. Concertgoers will again have the chance to wander through the natural world with the notes from Hunter Noack's Steinway piano transmitted through wireless headphones into their ears.

IN A LANDSCAPE first came to Teton Valley in 2021 and took place at the beautiful Fox Creek Ranch. The late Nancy Huntsman and her family worked tirelessly to revitalize Fox Creek Ranch, returning it to prime Yellowstone cutthroat spawning habitat and a key migratory bird staging ground. Their work made the ranch a magical place to wander serenaded by the sounds of Noack's piano playing.

Last year, the concert was held at Pontirussa Ranch in the shadow of the Grand Teton, where rolling clouds and blustery winds complemented Noack's dramatic chords.

This year, the concert will take place at Six Springs Ranch, an 847-acre working ranch that is the first property the Land Trust conserved and is also home to our office. It's fitting that Six Springs Ranch will be celebrated with the concert. Its conservation marks the beginning of the Land Trust's journey that has resulted in nearly 40,000 acres protected in eastern Idaho. What you see at Six Springs Ranch today is the result of years of efforts by landowners Jill

and Lew Mithun, Land Trust staff, volunteers, and partners to rehabilitate the landscape. A defunct dike damming the creek was removed; three irrigation ponds were reshaped, terraced, and planted in tall vegetation to benefit wetland-dependent wildlife; and 20 acres were converted from fallow field to a moist soil management area to provide stopover habitat for migrating waterbirds. In addition, 2,640 feet of stream banks were restored and stabilized, and 400 trees were planted to provide cover for fish and wildlife.

Today, forested and willow vegetation provide breeding habitat for neotropical songbirds and raptors and year-round shelter for moose. Ranch grasslands are breeding habitat for the globally imperiled Long-billed Curlew. Mule deer, Trumpeter Swans and Bald Eagles are all frequent winter visitors, and lower Teton Creek and tributary spring creeks on Six Springs are among the last strongholds for spawning Yellowstone cutthroat trout in upper Teton Valley.

Thanks to this dedicated work, this property epitomizes all three conservation values stated in the Land Trust's mission: agricultural land, fish and wildlife habitat, and scenic open spaces.

We hope you secured your tickets and can join us on August 2 to enjoy the concert, take a conservation tour of the ranch, and catch up with fellow members at the post-concert cocktail party at the Six Springs Barn.

Greater Sandhill Cranes on a Land Trust conserved property in Teton Valley

The Greater Yellowstone Crane Festival, held every September since 2018, celebrates the fall migration of Sandhill Cranes south to their wintering grounds. Teton Valley is home to the largest staging population of Sandhill Cranes in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The crane festival honors these magnificent birds through art and science for people of all ages.

Each year the festival is a little different, and this year will be no exception. In addition to the morning crane tours and workshops you've come to love, we are excited to offer a few new things.

On May 31 at 7 pm, we will have the inaugural Crane Festival Poster Reveal Party at Highpoint Cider in Victor. We will unveil the new poster for the 6th Annual Greater Yellowstone Crane Festival to the public for the first time at the event. One dollar from every cider sold will be donated to the Greater Sandhill Crane Initiative.

During the Crane Festival in September, Nicolette Maw will be facilitating a crane-themed Paint and Sip gathering at Wildlife Brewing in Victor using an original piece she'll produce for the festival as inspiration. You'll get to go home with your very own crane painting! We will also have an evening of crane-themed live storytelling with Valley Voices. Participants will have the opportunity to tell their own crane stories, whether they are funny, emotional, adventurous, or anywhere in between.

Back by popular demand this year, we will have our big community event on the plaza in Driggs. The celebration features food and drinks; crane-themed dances and music; artist workshops including poetry, printmaking, drawing, and photography; art fair; auction of crane sculptures; and more! Dan Collins, Southwest Region Migratory Game Bird Biologist with US Fish and Wildlife Service, will be giving our keynote address at Pierre's Theater in Victor. He has years of experience studying and managing Sandhill Cranes on their winter range in New Mexico and his talk is sure to be informative and entertaining. For more information, to sign up for events, and to see the full schedule as it becomes available, please visit tetonlandtrust.org/events.



Come stay overnight in Teton Valley!

Enjoy crane tours, workshops, storytelling, a film and speaker, painting, and the Saturday Community Celebration. For more information on the week's activities, please visit tetonlandtrust.org.

Sponsored by:























Get To Know Our New Board Members

SANDY SCHULTZ HESSLER



Sandy is the director of education at Silicon Couloir, a Teton Leadership Center and Start Up Success program. She brings thirty years of experience working with both Blue Chip and startup companies. Her passion is to help people and teams catalyze the power they hold within to generate maximum health, growth, and success. Over the last six years, Sandy has deepened her knowledge of psychology, consciousness, and success coaching by earning a masters in spiritual psychology and working on a PhD in depth psychology.

"I grew up in Detroit, spent seven years in Cincinnati and nearly twenty in Boston before moving to the Tetons thirteen years ago. I moved over to Teton Valley nearly three years ago, drawn by the peacefulness, people and big skies.

"Much of my work these days is helping to rebuild our human connection and synergy with the natural world. When we remember our reciprocal relationship, when we take the time to breathe in the wonder, everything begins to heal. And to create the space for this reconnection, we need to ensure that the natural world is supported and flourishing. The Land Trust are stewards of helping the natural corridors and ecosystems thrive as we balance human and nature's needs and growth. I'm excited to help support that stewardship."

NED CORKRAN



Ned is a Teton Valley resident whose professional life has included work with programs like Red Top Meadows and Outward Bound helping youth find their passions and values as they become adults.

"I grew up on the East Coast, Pennsylvania specifically, and came out west soon after I escaped from college. While spending time in these mountains, I came to enjoy the sightings of wildlife, especially the interactions between them, and coming to understand their involvement in the ecosystem. Over the years the area has grown on me as I have become more aware of how unique the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is. The relatively pristine ecosystem is unusual and special, one of the most ecologically intact ecosystems in the Lower 48.

"I believe that the Land Trust presents one of our best chances to preserve the landscape as it is, with a minimum of human influence and an abundance of wildlife. Undeveloped land and conservation easements allow both wildlife and people to co-exist. Development is increasing rapidly, especially in the past few years, and the valley I moved into twenty-five years ago has changed significantly. I get involved because I believe that we can influence our community and the world around us. We can either influence it positively or adversely. Let's direct that influence in a direction we can enjoy in the future."

NEAL STELTING



Neal R. Stelting is a husband, father, outdoorsman, and attorney, in that order of priority. He and his wife Lauren, and their two children, Sam and Lucy, moved to Teton Valley in 2021. Neal and Lauren have lived in the Jackson and Pinedale, Wyoming areas since approximately 2005. Lauren is a financial advisor with Farm Bureau Financial Services.

Neal received his law degree from the University of Wyoming (2004) and received his law licenses in Washington (2005), Wyoming (2006), Montana (2017), and Idaho (2020). He provides business, contract, litigation, and mediation services to a wide variety of people and industries in Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana, including construction, oil and gas, real estate, land use, trust litigation, and many others. Neal's career has been devoted to public service and preserving the integrity of the legal profession.

Letter from our Board President

BUILDING ON MOMENTUM



"Time spent among trees is never time wasted." - Anonymous

As I reflect on the Land Trust's last few years, I'm pleased with what has been accomplished under difficult circumstances and excited about where we're headed. I'm filled with gratitude and awe of the Land Trust staff for pulling together and giving it all they had during an extended period of uncertainty. This passionate and committed group of people not only kept the organization afloat during a pandemic along with several key vacancies, but excelled at successfully making progress in terms of conservation and fundraising.

With a full staff led by Executive Director Kim Trotter, we finalized a 183-acre conservation easement with the Fosdick family at the beginning of the year, and we have many exciting conservation projects in the works. Additionally, we are working on a new strategic business plan to serve as our roadmap for the future.

Building on that momentum, we are at a crucial point for the Land Trust in terms of moving us forward at a time when our service area is experiencing substantial population growth that is putting development pressure on vulnerable lands. It's imperative that we see this not as an imposition but as an opportunity. People are moving here because they love the landscapes of eastern Idaho as much as we do, and it's important they know that the Land Trust is here to help protect the area for this and future generations. Together, we can all conserve, protect, and enjoy the beauty that is around us.

I'm also grateful to my colleagues who volunteer their time and talents in countless ways on the Board of Directors of the Land Trust. What an inspiring group of people! And I can't write a President's Message without a special thank you to our donors, as your support is literally the gift that keeps on giving. Land that you help conserve remains as it is today in perpetuity!

Thank you!

Arantza Zabala

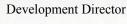
Leaving Your Mark on Eastern Idaho's Future

WHY CONSIDER LEGACY GIVING?

Most of us wait to get our estate plans in order. I get it! I really do. We all tend to want to put off the hard stuff until later. However, I want to take a few minutes to highlight the importance of setting up your estate plans early and the benefits it provides. The number one benefit is the peace of mind of knowing that, by leaving a charitable gift in your estate plans, you are ensuring that the Land Trust continues to receive your much needed support. This can have a significant impact on eastern Idaho's treasured landscapes and wildlife because our work is in perpetuity and because estate gifts are historically the largest gifts the Land Trust has received. The second benefit is that once you have designated a charitable gift in your estate plans, you reduce the amount of taxes that are being taken out of your estate. While these tax advantages make a difference to those that receive your generous gift, there are also ways right now to get tax advantages when giving your annual membership donation. Some examples are qualified charitable distributions directly from your IRA account, gifts of appreciated stock or mutual funds, or gifts of real estate or other assets. Your legacy gift can make a real difference to our ability to conserve more land. Leave your mark on eastern Idaho's future by planning your legacy today!

With gratitude,

Jeske Gräve



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

PLEASE REMEMBER US IN YOUR TIN CUP GIVING THIS YEAR.

To give, go to cftetonvalley.org between June 15 and July 21 and select Teton Regional Land Trust as a donation recipient.

Since 1990, we have helped conserve 12,503 acres in Teton County, all of which we will steward forever. We hope you will join this year's Tin Cup community-giving campaign to help us accelerate our conservation work in the face of increased development pressures. Together, we can make a difference in the future of Teton Valley!

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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 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

