

THE LAND STEWARD

Teton Regional Land Trust's Stewardship Newsletter

Fall 2023

Where Do The Hawks Go?

Now that we have celebrated the Autumn Equinox, summer is officially over. I know that I will hold the memories of the warm sun and the colors of the wildflowers close to my heart until next year. Like many hawks, I remain in eastern Idaho throughout the winter. I am curious, do you live in eastern Idaho seasonally, year-round, or are you migrating through on your way to somewhere else?

No matter if you have a nomadic or a sedentary lifestyle, or if you are a snowbird or a sunbird, there are hawks that follow a similar course as you do. Swainson's Hawks spend the summer in eastern Idaho, while Ferruginous Hawks and Roughed-legged Hawks spend the winter here. Red-tailed Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Northern Goshawks, and Northern Harriers all reside in the region year-round. Osprey are also year-round residents of eastern Idaho and look similar to hawks; however, they are not in the hawk family. Osprey breed in the area and can often be seen catching and eating fish.

Swainson's Hawks, are quite the travelers! Swainson's Hawks arrive in eastern Idaho in April and spend their summer raising young before they depart for Argentina in August or September. The trip to Argentina is approximately 6,000 miles and can take up to two months to complete.

Ferruginous Hawks winter in eastern Idaho (as opposed to the summering Swainson's Hawks) and can often be seen in open areas. There are dark morph and light morph Ferruginous Hawks, so be sure to keep an eye out! Rough-legged Hawks are also travelers who prefer eastern Idaho in the wintertime. Rough-legged Hawks summer and breed in the Artic Tundra, and then migrate to wintering grounds in the US (including eastern Idaho) and Southern Canada. If you keep your eyes to the sky, hawks provide yet another indicator of changing seasons and can also provide companionship throughout the year.—Nicole Cyr, Stewardship Assistant

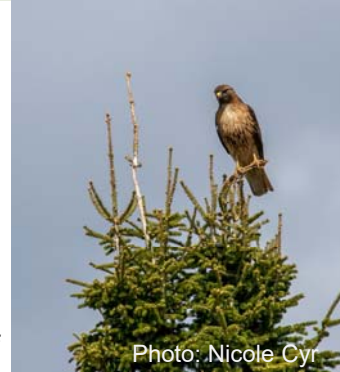


Photo: Nicole Cyr

TRLT Staff

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Development &
Communications
Associate

Kristy Smith,
Stewardship
Associate

Soil Health Resources

This past spring, our Stewardship Associates participated in a week long Soil Health Steward workshop made possible by a grant from the American Farmland Trust. As part of this grant, we have been gathering information from our agricultural easement landowners to learn more about the practices our landowners are implementing on their ground to promote soil health. We have also been gathering information on areas where landowners could use technical assistance and the challenges our landowners have faced implementing, or even considering implementing, soil health principles. Next field season, we will be continuing this work in an effort to connect more landowners to resources related to promoting soil health. Please visit our website at the link below for literature that you may find helpful regarding soil health practices:

[Teton Regional Land Trust Soil Health Resource Page](#)

[NRCS Soil Health Resources](#)



inspiring you to protect great places





Photo: Kristy Smith

Fall Transitions

As the leaves turn from green to gold, we here at the Land Trust's stewardship department are feeling the urgency to wrap up our field season before the snow flies. Similarly, many of our landowners are busy doing the same with tasks on their properties. As the days get shorter, there seems to be less and less time to get things done. If you have any plans to make changes to your property this fall or winter, please give us a call at the Land Trust to make sure your plans align with your conservation easement agreement. You may have plans for a new fence, or plans for a new storage shed; whatever those plans may be, there may be restrictions on where those may be located, limits to their size or height, or in some cases, new structures may not be allowed at all. Each individual agreement has different permitted and prohibited uses that were negotiated at the time the conservation easement was placed, and those terms are in place to protect those conservation values for which your land was protected. We are always happy to answer any questions you might have.

As many of you have seen yourself, eastern Idaho is growing at a rapid pace, and with that growth, we are seeing lots of new developments. You may have new residences under construction next door to your property, or a subdivision proposed in close proximity to your land. Please keep a close eye on your property boundaries and mark them as needed to prevent encroachments and to deter trespassers. Also, with this growth, you may be approached with requests to grant right of ways for roads or utilities, or maybe even be asked to sell or divide your land. If you do get a request such as this, please note that most conservation easements prohibit granting these types of easements that do not predate your conservation easement agreement, and many prohibit dividing your property. In the event you find yourself in this situation, please contact the Land Trust Stewardship department and share these plans with us so that we can determine if they are permitted by your conservation easement before you agree to anything. One phone call could save us all a headache down the road.

If there is ever a question if something is permitted or not, please give us a call at 208-354-8939.

We are always happy to hear from our conservation easement landowners!

— Kimberly Holmes, Stewardship Director



When to Give Notice

If you are unsure if an activity requires prior notification and/or approval from the Land Trust, or if you are unsure of the timeframe you need to give the Land Trust to grant approval of an activity,

Give us a call!

We are always happy to answer questions regarding your conservation easement.

Planning to build or add on to a structure?

Give Us a Call!

Planning to change your land management practices?

Give Us a Call!

Planning to build a fence or road?

Give Us a Call!

Planning to sell/gift your conservation easement property?

Give Us a Call!

Need to update your contact information or preference?

Give Us a Call!

Have you been approached about a lease or utility easement ?

Give Us a Call!

208-354-8939



TETON REGIONAL LAND TRUST

Regional County Weed Contacts

Don't forget to reach out to your local county weed representative to stay up to date regarding any weed control assistance that might be available:

Bonneville County:
Jud Elkington,
Weed Superintendent
208-529-1397

Clark County:
Bo Billman,
Weed Department
208-374-5121

Fremont County:
Bryce Fowler,
Weed Supervisor
208-624-7442

Jefferson County:
Mitch Whitmill,
Weed Superintendent
208-745-9221

Madison County:
Jeremy Johnson,
Weed Supervisor
208-356-3139

Teton County, ID:
Mark Paglierani
Weeds/Vegetation
Management
Superintendent
208-821-0984

Teton County, WY:
Lesley Beckworth
Teton County Weed &
Pest District
307-733-8419

Farm Technology

Everywhere we look there is a new, automated way to work. Technology aims to make our lives easier; from smartphone apps to medical procedures, every industry is seeing improvements to efficiencies, and most of those improvements are aided by advances in technology. The farming and ranching industries are no exception. Here we will explore a few newer technologies that may become more accessible in the near future, and could aid in finding efficiencies for your operation. Please remember to call the Land Trust before installing new infrastructure in order to ensure that it is permitted by your conservation easement.

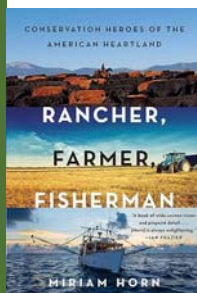
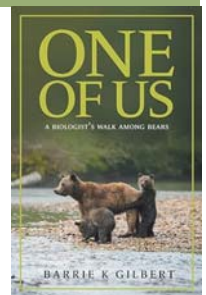


With around 170 conservation easement properties to visit annually, I thought that I had seen every kind of gate there is. That is until this contraption caught my eye over the summer; a drive over gate. Designed in Australia, the OzAutogate is an automatic, powerless gate that uses the weight of your truck to open and close the gate, all without need for a power source, and without leaving your cab. The ramp design is also cattle resistant, so there is some assurance that they'll stay in. While I have not seen one of these in person, I was drawn to the concept having experienced battling various gates in the rain and the snow, often with livestock hot on my heels thinking, "man, there's got to be a better way!". While we have yet to see a gate like this on a conservation easement property, we would love to see any cool contraption that you may have come up with that makes your operation a little easier!

Another cool piece of technology aiming to make operations run smoother and improve your bottom line is the concept of e-fencing livestock. E-fence companies, such as Vence, have created a virtual fencing system using advanced GPS collars and an app on your smartphone to create sustainable and efficient grazing systems using invisible fences and tracking technology. The collars keep your livestock contained by emitting a radio frequency to keep them in a virtual fence that you design. Sensors also allow you to track their location, and some even have the ability to collect data so you can keep a check on their health; monitoring estrus, alerting you to illness, and more. Using virtual fencing, a producer can experiment with various livestock management techniques such as rotational and strip grazing, maximizing their yields and saving dollars that can be put back into the operation. While I haven't seen virtual fencing on a conservation easement property, it has made its way to the Intermountain West, and we should expect to hear more accounts of its profitability in the coming years.— Kimberly Holmes

Staff Picks

Nicole Cyr, Stewardship Assistant recently read the book "One of US" by Barrie Gilbert. The book compares bear behavior and research methodologies from different places within the US. The most fascinating comparison to Nicole is Yellowstone NP and the Brooks River along Katmai NP (Alaska). Reading this book definitely challenged what Nicole thought she knew about local grizzly bear research.



Oftentimes it's challenging to find time to read during the busy summer months, yet, Stewardship Associate, Katie Guetz, got excited about a book that weaves together stories of five American conservation heroes. "Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman", by Miriam Horn, looks at the lives of everyday men and women in the American Heartland who are stewarding the lands and waters that sustain our nation.

Photo Credit: Amazon

Know Your Willows

Thirteen species of willow (*Salix*) are native to Idaho. They are an integral part of the Snake River floodplain landscape in Eastern Idaho. Whether getting a fly caught in one while fishing or whittling a whistle from its young branches, chances are, you have interacted with willows in some way in this region.

Bebb's willow grows in a wide range of riparian areas, but prefers lots of sunshine and periodically dry soils. It's a fast-growing species, establishing quickly in disturbed riparian areas. It can be identified by its dull blue-green ovate leaves, which are hairy upon emergence, as well as its vibrant red stems and branches when mature.

Drummond willow can be found in moist mountain habitats along main drainages. Its leaves curl under at the edges and have woolly undersides. Catkins (flowers) are produced before leaves emerge, and a distinct waxy film covers early blooms and stems.

Geyer willow grows in drier sites with fine alluvial soils, and can form dense colonial thickets. Its leaves are very small, dark green, and narrow. In winter, a white chalky substance forms on the stems.

Coyote willow grows in a sprawling fashion, and is one of few species able to penetrate sod-bound grasses to establish roots. Its leaves are long and narrow, and its twigs are reddish brown to ashy gray. Because coyote willow can tolerate nutrient-poor soil and moderate salinity, it is a good candidate for restoring disturbed ecosystems.

As the final willow leaves fall this year, take a moment to appreciate the important ecological role they provide in housing and feeding wildlife, stabilizing banks, and keeping our water clean! - Kristy Smith



Photo: Kristy Smith

Aspens on the Landscape



Photo: Owcation

Fall in eastern Idaho is indicated by migrating sandhill cranes, frosty night-time temperatures, and the dramatic change of surrounding aspen trees. As the days get shorter and cooler, aspen trees begin reducing the amount of chlorophyll (what gives plants their green color) available to their leaves, thus allowing for other pigments to be revealed.

We know that these colors announce the change in season, but did you know that the most vibrant colors also indicate the healthiest and most robust aspen stands? This is because a combination of temperature and moisture control the intensity and duration of the colors. Therefore, a wetter growing season followed by a sunny and cool autumn will yield the best colors!

Further, healthier aspen stands also provide a number of ecosystem benefits that are important to our landscape as a whole. For instance, aspen store carbon, provide water storage in their root systems, supply as much forage as a grassland, and contain 10 times more palatable biomass than conifer forests. Moreover, aspen provide important feeding and nesting habitat for numerous songbird species, as well as various mammals that utilize their understory. In fact, aspen are a keystone species and are the second most biodiverse of forest ecosystems, following only streamside forest ecosystems. For these reasons, among others, the Stewardship team enjoys working with our landowners to help protect and enhance aspen forest health across our conservation easement properties. These groves, as well as the individual trees found within them, are a crucial part of our landscape and ecosystem!! - Katie Guetz

CONTACT US

For questions, to schedule a meeting to review your conservation easement or to schedule a visit to walk your land, contact us today!

Teton Regional Land Trust

(208) 354-8939

**USDA /NRCS
Service
Centers**

**Idaho Falls
Service
Center:
208-522-6250**

**Rigby Service
Center:
208-745-6664**

**Rexburg
Service
Center:
208-356-5701**

**St. Anthony
Service
Center:
208-624-7391**

**Driggs Service
Center:
208-354-2680**

