

# Celebrating 35 Years

Your  
**place**

INSPIRING YOU TO  
PROTECT GREAT PLACES

SUMMER 2025



Cover Photo  
by Linda M Swope

# Roots and Wings: Celebrating 35 Years of Conservation



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

Dear Friends,

As we mark 35 years of conservation in eastern Idaho, **we celebrate you**—the farmers, ranchers, and landowners who continue to trust us with their conservation legacies; the volunteers who multiply our impact; and the communities who champion the permanent protection of working lands, wildlife habitat, and scenic open space.

From the earliest visionaries—many still Lifetime Members and trusted friends—to the young conservationists we continue to meet through the Michael B. Whitfield Scholarship, it's clear this mission has roots and wings.

And speaking of wings, spring's return brings with it a familiar sound: the ancient call of the Sandhill Crane. These majestic birds have returned once again. In uncertain times, their reliable arrival is grounding, even hopeful.

**But their return is not guaranteed.**

To help ensure a thriving future for the cranes, we're launching a campaign to fund the Rod Drewien Crane Conservation Fund—a permanent fund supporting habitat protection, monitoring, and community education. It's a natural next step in the long-term care of the places that sustain them—and us.

We hope you'll join us for a full summer of events, including our 35th Anniversary Barn Party on August 2—a celebration of land, community, and conservation you won't want to miss.

Bring a friend, get outside, and enjoy the wild and working lands we've protected together—forever.

Warmly,  
Kim

## STAFF

Kami Archibald  
DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT

Mandy Crane  
OUTREACH AND EVENTS  
COORDINATOR

Nicole Cyr  
STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATE

Katie Gabel-Patterson  
FINANCE AND OPERATIONS  
MANAGER

Lydia Hanson  
STAFF ATTORNEY  
CONSERVATION PROJECT  
MANAGER

Renee Hiebert  
LAND PROTECTION DIRECTOR

Kimberly Holmes  
STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

Anna Naylor  
ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

Niah Pennington  
STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATE

Kristy Smith  
STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATE

Tamara Sperber  
CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

Kim Trotter  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Rogers  
*President*

Bruce Mincher,  
*Vice President*

William "Brad" Bradley  
*Treasurer*

Ned Corkran  
*Secretary*

Sarah Ashworth

Jeff Carr

Sandy Schultz Hessler

Bruce Linger

Mike Merigliano

Paul Merrill

David Pease

Arantza Zabala

# Working Together for Public Benefit

For 35 years, Teton Regional Land Trust has been working with landowners to preserve the unique character of eastern Idaho. You might be wondering, “**How does that work?**”

**It all starts with a conversation.** Landowners come to us with their goals. They might want to pass the family land to future generations, to ensure the land is protected forever, or to seek financial and tax benefits.

We evaluate the property to see if it is a priority for permanent protection based on agricultural, natural, and scenic attributes. If it is, we work together to set up a conservation agreement.

**A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust.** It permanently limits certain types of development on a property. The land remains privately owned, and the landowner retains the right to use it for purposes such as farming, ranching, hunting, recreation, or public access if they so choose—all depending on the terms of the agreement.

Land trusts are strong advocates for private property rights, including a landowner's ability to safeguard their land through a conservation easement. Protecting these places benefits everyone. Open spaces, farms, and wildlife areas make eastern Idaho better by:

- **Providing Economic and Health Benefits:** Open spaces give us more places to play, improve our health, increase quality of life, attract businesses, and increase property values.

- **Providing Food and Protecting Natural Resources:** Farms and ranches contribute to our food supply, clean water, and wildlife habitat.
- **Offering a Voluntary Way to Protect Land:** Conservation agreements give public benefits without the high cost of buying land.

After the land is protected, we keep working with landowners to monitor the easements and provide resources. We build strong relationships with landowners to ensure long-term success.

We're proud of the work we do and the relationships we build. Together, we're preserving the beauty and heritage of eastern Idaho for future generations.

**Working with  
landowners  
to protect  
43,009  
acres  
since 1995**



Renee Heibert  
meeting with  
conservation  
easement holders,  
Tim and Wendy  
Brockish



# Land Protection



# Wetland Conservation Leveraged for Eastern Idaho

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) is a federal law that provides grants for projects that protect, restore, and enhance wetland habitats critical for migratory birds across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The NAWCA Grants Program, administered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has been in existence since 1991 and is a highly competitive matching grant program that supports public-private wetland conservation partnerships. With these grants, partners must match their grants at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. For example, a \$1 million federal grant needs to also contribute at least \$1 million in nonfederal sources.

Teton Regional Land Trust has been the proud recipient of nine NAWCA \$1 million grant awards. With \$9 million in federal grant funding, we and our partners have achieved great conservation feats. Since our first NAWCA grant award in 1997, **we have worked together to permanently conserve 15,692 acres of wetlands and associated uplands in eastern Idaho and have restored 9,991 wetland acres.** The \$9 million in federal grant funding enabled us to leverage over **\$56,000,000** in matching funds.

With the recent completion of our ninth NAWCA grant in March 2025, this particular Upper Snake River NAWCA grant leveraged nearly \$2,800,000 in match funding, restored 56 acres and permanently conserved 1,101 acres, including the Dick Creek and Tom's Creek conservation projects.

Teton Regional Land Trust wishes to extend sincere gratitude to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, generous landowners, state and other federal partners, and private individuals and foundations that have helped contribute to this notable wetland conservation success in eastern Idaho.



**15,692**  
**acres of**  
**wetlands**  
**protected**



# Preserving Lands Along the Teton River

**29.3  
miles of  
Teton River  
permanently  
protected**

Last year, Teton Regional Land Trust and an anonymous family completed a 140-acre conservation easement on the east side of the Teton River in the central part of Teton Basin. The Dick Creek property lies within a vast complex of private lands protected with conservation easements held by the Land Trust, adding to a mosaic of conserved lands near the Teton River, benefiting wildlife and recreationists.

**“We love Teton Valley and thought that a conservation easement would be a great way to preserve the land in perpetuity,” the landowner says. “Because this property is between other conservation easements, it made sense to protect it.”**



This property's proximity to other protected lands means that wildlife can continue to move freely between the fields and the Teton River. The open space also provides scenic value for the public, especially recreationists on the river. It contains Teton River frontage, spring creeks, and abundant wetlands. The west side of the property is bordered by the Teton River, while Dick Creek flows through the land from the east, then empties into the Teton River at the western boundary.

The landowners have engaged in extensive wetland restoration activities on the land. According to the landowner: **“Since purchasing the property, we have planted more than 1,968 willows and aspens along the creek and river. We hope to continue working on the habitat in the future.”**

***“Habitat loss due to development is a real thing; our wildlife needs undisturbed space in order to thrive.”***

**- DICK CREEK PROPERTY LANDOWNER**

Teton River frontage on  
Dick Creek property

# Local Family's Third Conservation Easement Protects 320 Acres in Island Park

This spring, a local eastern Idaho family completed a **320-acre conservation easement** in Island Park with Teton Regional Land Trust. The land is within prime grizzly bear habitat and comprised of open grazed land, upland forest, and wetland vegetation along springs and creeks. The Tom's Creek property is an inholding within the Caribou-Targhee National Forest and is completely surrounded by state and federal protected lands that support many wildlife species, including migrating herds of pronghorn.

The Tom's Creek property, owned for nearly 50 years by the same family, has been used primarily to graze cattle. The family has been working with the Land Trust for close to a decade on the protection of this parcel, but they are no strangers to our work, having conserved two other properties already. **"Our family chose Teton Regional Land Trust because of their continued commitment to agriculture and agricultural families,"** the landowner explained. **"We want to ensure the protection of our ground for future generations of farmers and ranchers."**

Funding for this project and the Dick Creek project came from various sources, including grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's **North American Wetlands Conservation Act**, as well as other foundations and private donors.

## Working with same family for 25 years to protect 1,000 acres in Fremont County



Vital wetlands on Tom's Creek property



Landowners exploring Tom's Creek by horseback

*"Humans cannot live without food. It is that simple. And this allows us to continue to do what we love and fulfill our family's commitment to protect agriculture for future generations."*

- TOM'S CREEK PROPERTY OWNER





# Stewardship



# Greater Yellowstone Sandhill Crane Initiative

## PROTECTING AN ANCIENT JOURNEY

Imagine you're flying. This 3,000-mile journey you know by heart is one your ancestors have made for generations. You know the winding riverbanks, open wetlands, and quiet fields, just as they did. As you get closer, you look down expectantly, eager to see the land stirring with life. But now, as you prepare to land in the place that has always welcomed you, something is different. Many of the familiar landscapes have been replaced by rooftops, roads, and unfamiliar animals. **It is not like it used to be.**

Sandhill Cranes depend on us to save their homes and provide safe places to forage. These majestic birds concentrate in eastern Idaho for pre-migration staging each fall to forage before making their annual flights to New Mexico for the winter.



PHOTO: KIT WIETNAUER; OPPOSITE PAGE, LINDA M SWOPE

Teton Regional Land Trust and its partners at the Greater Yellowstone Sandhill Crane Initiative have incentivized farmers to provide habitat for cranes through the Grain for Cranes project. This program compensates local farmers for planting “lure” food plots that feed cranes while reducing crop damage in nearby fields. Crane Initiative partners are committed to creating a permanent fund that will ensure the longevity of this conservation work.

**In memory of Rod Drewien, who was the region's most prominent crane biologist and dear friend of the Land Trust, the Rod Drewien Crane Conservation Fund will support permanent protection of crane habitat, fund the Grain for Cranes program, and continue crane monitoring to ensure these incredible creatures can thrive.**

This is a call to action for all of us who cherish the beauty and grace of the Sandhill Cranes.

By protecting these majestic birds, we honor the legacy of our own families and ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to experience the beauty of cranes and the places they call home. Together we will soar!

**575  
acres  
planted to  
date in Grains  
for Cranes,  
about 40-60  
acres per year**

*“The Land Trust was one of the first nonprofits we volunteered with in Teton Valley because of our love of the outdoors and their mission of land and wildlife conservation. We continue to volunteer because the Land Trust staff never fail to make us feel welcome and needed. We love volunteering because of that.”*

— ANNA KIRKPATRICK



Anna Kirkpatrick  
helping with fencing project.

## The Power of Volunteers

Land trusts play a crucial role in protecting, managing, and enhancing natural landscapes, particularly those that are privately owned. **However, our impact would be significantly limited without the dedication of volunteers.** By leveraging the time, skills, and passion of volunteers, Teton Regional Land Trust can extend its stewardship efforts far beyond what paid staff alone could accomplish.

The Land Trust’s stewardship program is essential for ensuring the ecological integrity of the lands we protect. Tasks such as habitat restoration, invasive species removal, fence and property maintenance, and wildlife monitoring require consistent attention. Volunteers amplify these efforts, ensuring that the lands we protect remain healthy and accessible to wildlife. The contributions of our volunteer time reduce costs, allowing us to allocate more resources toward protecting additional lands.

Throughout the year, volunteers are engaged in various projects like maintaining willow plantings on creek corridors; providing riparian cover and streambank stabilization; or fence removals, safeguarding wildlife from entanglement or collision risks. We also use volunteers for noxious weed removal on lands that we own and manage, reducing the number of hours we spend treating those weeds with chemicals, and ensuring natural communities of native plants are not impacted by invasives.

We depend on volunteers to assist with our species conservation projects such as Trumpeter Swan monitoring and our fall Greater Sandhill Crane counts, which take place throughout the month of September as cranes from reaches further north stop over and stage in Teton Basin before their big migration south.

**Beyond physical labor, volunteers also serve as ambassadors for conservation.** By engaging in stewardship activities, they develop a deeper connection to the land and Teton Regional Land Trust’s mission. Many go on to educate their communities, advocate for conservation policies, and even become long-term donors or board members. This grassroots involvement strengthens our reach and sustainability.







ABOVE Stewardship team and volunteers getting ready to pull weeds. LEFT Lani and Wray Landon removing barbed wire fencing.

We hope that our volunteer opportunities benefit not only the Land Trust, but also the volunteers themselves. Many gain valuable skills in land management, ecological restoration, and environmental education. The experience fosters a sense of purpose, community, and connection to nature—elements that are increasingly sought after in today's fast-paced world.

In the face of growing environmental challenges, land trusts must rely on the collective power of communities to safeguard our natural heritage. **Volunteers are the backbone of these efforts, ensuring that protected lands remain vibrant and well cared for, now and for future generations.**

If you're interested in being added to our volunteer list, please contact Mandy Crane, Outreach and Events Coordinator, at [mandy@tetonlandtrust.org](mailto:mandy@tetonlandtrust.org).



***"I volunteered to lead the photography workshop for the first Crane Festival. I had admired the work of the Land Trust but had not personally connected with the staff yet. Once I saw inside the organization and the vital work being done by talented, passionate people, I was 100% on board to help in any way."***

— LINDA SWOPE, PHOTOGRAPHER

*Teton Regional Land Trust is currently accepting prospective volunteer board and committee member applications for 2026. If you are interested in joining, please email [kimt@tetonlandtrust.org](mailto:kimt@tetonlandtrust.org).*



# Outreach & Engagement





# Celebrating Our Lifetime Members

As we look back on our journey of 35 years, we want to take a moment to shine a spotlight on our incredible lifetime members—**those who have supported conservation through financial or volunteer contributions for more than 15 consecutive years.** Their steadfast commitment and passion for our mission have played a crucial role in our successes and achievements.

Lifetime members embody the spirit of dedication to conservation and their support has allowed us to make significant strides in protecting the natural treasures of eastern Idaho. Whether through funding, volunteering, or advocacy, their contributions have made a lasting impact on our community.

Their unwavering belief in our work inspires us every day. **Together, we are creating a legacy of conservation that will benefit future generations.**

Thank you, lifetime members, for being a vital part of our journey.



Lifetime member Mike Merigliano with Shoshone-Bannock Youth.

**Teton Regional Land Trust has 75 lifetime members who have supported us for at least 15 consecutive years!**

*“In the beginning, the Land Trust was mostly about ‘keeping things the same,’ but as time goes by, their ways change to adapt to new situations and new thinking, and I appreciate that.”*

**-MIKE MERIGLIANO**

# Join us for our 35th Anniversary Barn Party!

2025 marks 35 years of Teton Regional Land Trust working to protect the lands that define our region—rich wildlife habitat, productive farms and ranches, and the scenic open spaces we all cherish. To celebrate this milestone, we're throwing a barn party at Six Spring Ranch, home of the Land Trust's office, on the evening of **Saturday, August 2nd**. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for an evening of great food, drinks, music, dancing, and a **live auction led by an auctioneer**—all in the company of friends and supporters who have been a part of this journey.

We promise a memorable night honoring the incredible community that has made 35 years of conservation possible. Get your tickets at [tetonlandtrust.org](https://tetonlandtrust.org). We can't wait to celebrate with you!



## Sponsors list

Grand Targhee Resort  
Targhee Village Golf Course  
Dragonfly Lane  
Flying S Title & Escrow  
Moose Creek Ranch  
Granite Creek Valuation  
Kate's Real Food Bars



## 8TH ANNUAL GREATER YELLOWSTONE CRANE FESTIVAL

September 17-20 TETON VALLEY, IDAHO  
**Come stay in Teton Valley!**

Sponsored by:



Enjoy crane tours, workshops, and Community Crane Celebration at Grand Teton Brewing. For more information on the week's activities, please visit [tetonlandtrust.org](https://tetonlandtrust.org).



# Leaving Your Legacy

Planned giving is a powerful way to leave a lasting legacy in this region we all cherish. **By including Teton Regional Land Trust in your estate plans, you help ensure that the landscapes, wildlife habitats, and agricultural heritage of eastern Idaho remains protected for generations to come.**

These gifts take many forms, from bequests and beneficiary designations to charitable trusts and land donations. Regardless of the method, planned giving reflects a commitment to safeguarding the region's natural beauty and ecological integrity beyond one's lifetime.

The generosity of planned giving donors lays a solid foundation for Teton Regional Land Trust to monitor conservation easements in perpetuity. These gifts have played a critical role in protecting thousands of acres of vital habitat, toward on-the-ground projects, and foundation grants, and strengthening our ability to support land-owners in their conservation efforts.

Planned giving also helps preserve the region's agricultural heritage. Many families who have farmed this land for generations find comfort in knowing that their legacy will continue through conservation. Protecting working lands not only sustains local food production, but also maintains open spaces and critical wildlife corridors.

**For those who cherish the natural world—whether through hiking, wildlife viewing, or simply appreciating the open landscapes—planned giving provides an opportunity to give back to the land that has given so much. It is a meaningful way to ensure that future generations will experience the same connection to nature and community that so many hold dear today.**

If you are interested in learning more about how you can make a lasting impact through planned giving, please reach out to Kami at [kami@tetonlandtrust.org](mailto:kami@tetonlandtrust.org). Your legacy can help protect the land, wildlife, and way of life that makes eastern Idaho so special.

**76 people  
have included  
the Land  
Trust in their  
planned giving**



***"A legacy gift for me was a no-brainer. Conservation work doesn't stop just because I'm no longer around. The need goes on and it makes me feel good to know that I will be contributing, even though I'm no longer here. Teton Regional Land Trust makes it easy."***

**-WILLIAM "BRAD" BRADLEY**



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



## Remember Teton Regional Land Trust in Your Tin Cup Giving this Year!

**To donate, visit [tincupchallenge.org](https://tincupchallenge.org) between 9a.m. on June 13th and 5p.m. July 25, 2025, and select Teton Regional Land Trust as your recipient.**

Your contribution through Tin Cup will help us continue protecting Teton Valley's most vulnerable and irreplaceable habitats. With your support, we are able to collaborate with passionate landowners to conserve lands critical for wildlife and communities

alike. This collective effort ensures the preservation of the region's natural beauty and resources for generations to come. We can only do this work with your support. Please visit [tincup.org](https://tincup.org) to donate.

**Since 1990, your generosity has helped conserve over 13,000 acres in Teton County, including 29 miles along the Teton River.** Thank you for making such a lasting impact on this landscape for 35 years.



208.354.8939 | [TETONLANDTRUST.ORG](https://TETONLANDTRUST.ORG)



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. We are currently seeking reaccreditation, which is done every five years.*

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.

