

# open lands

news from the Jackson Hole Land Trust

WINTER 2011



*Poised for the Future*

# SNAKE RIVER RANCH

*~a family heritage*



FLO MCCALL

KIM FADIMAN

**When you take a walk with Bill Resor, don't forget your notebook.**

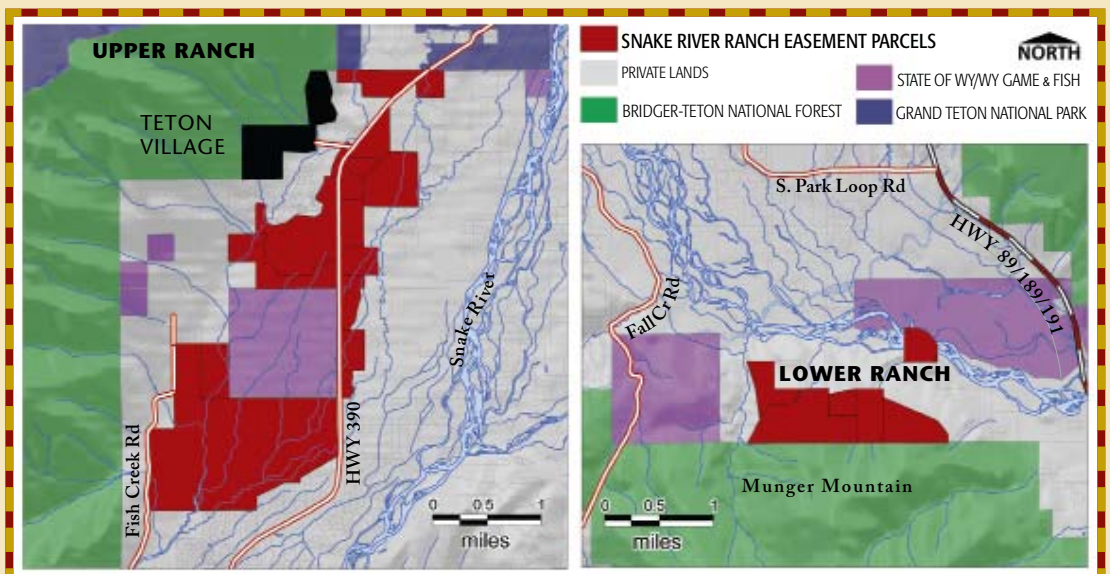
Be it an economics lesson in how conservation easements impact a ranch's bottom line or observations about the hydrology of the Snake River, Bill is a consummate teacher. In one breath, he will identify an obscure wildflower and assess a steer's health from a distance. He then moves on to painting a lively picture of the people and players who have shaped Jackson Hole, all while walking briskly and easily over the terrain at hand.

Hailing from a land-oriented and conservation-minded family, Bill's father, Stan Resor, was a founding board member of the Jackson Hole Land Trust. His wife, Story Clark, worked at the Land Trust for many years and was pivotal to its success, and he himself served on the Land Trust board. Beyond these obvious qualifications, Bill is intimately connected to the land and history of Jackson Hole. He was raised in Connecticut and Washington D.C., spending summers working on the family ranch in Jackson Hole before moving to the valley after completing college in Massachusetts. His family's presence in Jackson Hole dates back to October of 1929, when Bill's grandfather Stanley B. Resor purchased 400 acres here to establish the Snake River Ranch.

Based upon the enthusiastic recommendation from eleven-year-old Stan Resor (Bill's father) who had just spent the summer reveling with the Huyler clan, Stanley B. Resor purchased the land sight unseen from Coulter Huyler who owned the nearby Rocking H Ranch. By 1930, Bill's grandfather was whole-heartedly building a

cattle ranch and purchasing additional land to fill out the operation. The Snake River Ranch in those days was more diverse, counting sheep, milk cows, pigs and turkeys among the barnyard inhabitants. Due to its remoteness, the ranch had to be highly self-sufficient. You can still find the circular nail marks in the tack shed where the beaver pelts were tanned, as evidence of the ongoing battle to keep beavers out of the inlet channel for the hydroelectric generator.

As with many ranch operations in the valley, the Snake River Ranch evolved as economics and accessibility changed. Today, the ranch consists of the "upper ranch" near Teton Village and the "lower ranch" down Fall Creek Road at the base of Munger Mountain.



“We used to cut hay from over 3,000 acres and winter over 1,300 cows, summering them on two Forest Service allotments. We eventually reduced that to haying the most productive 600 acres and wintering 900 cows, while running some yearlings. Then we dropped our Forest Service grazing allotments and went to only yearlings, which is what we do now,” said Bill.

The bovines you see along Highway 390 or grazing on Munger Mountain begin their lives as weaned calves hailing from California, Nevada or Oregon. The ranch then winters them on leased pasture in California. Come May, these yearlings arrive by the truck-full to spend the summer chewing the cud in Jackson Hole. After a summer of tall grass and Teton views, these steers are sold to feedlots in the Midwest, fattening up to complete their lives as an entrée. Most of the Snake River Ranch cattle qualify for natural beef programs, meaning no growth hormones or antibiotics are ever used. Many of them meet the rigorous certifications for sale to European countries.

Bill’s mastery of the ranch operation came over time. “I have memories of counting hay bales for my grandfather and marking them down on a sheet that listed each part of each field,” said Bill. “When I was a teenager, I helped hay, either running equipment or stacking bales. We used to have range permits for our cowherd, and I would help move or gather cows. There was time for fun too, taking pack trips into the Tetons or floating the Snake River. With six brothers and lots of cousins, there was always a lot going on. After college, when I moved to Jackson Hole permanently, we had a new ranch manager, and I helped him get to know the property, and he taught me about land and cattle. It was just a slow evolution for me of doing what needed to be done to make the ranch work. I love land and water and trying to make it work. I enjoy trying to make a piece of ground work economically, agriculturally, and environmentally.”

When it came time for estate planning, Bill’s father Stan and his two aunts, Helen Hauge and Ann Laughlin used conservation easements to preserve a large portion of the familiar fields along Highway 390. Easements have remained an important tool for the family, enabling the ranch to stay in operation and protecting much of the character of his grandfather’s hard work.

“Every family and every ranch are different. In our case, we have gradually made decisions within the family and donated various easements on different parts of the ranch over the course of 24 years,” said Bill.

To date, the Resor, Hauge, and Laughlin families have placed nineteen different conservation easements over the ranch.

“By working with the Land Trust, my family has defined the limits of Teton Village by surrounding it with open space,” said Bill. “The Village will grow and redevelop over the years, but within a defined area. The approach to Teton Village and to Grand Teton National Park along Highway 390 is mostly protected.”

Local residents can mark time by what is happening in the agricultural fields that frame Jackson, Wilson, and Teton Village. These open lands allow passersby a chance to remain connected to earthly rhythms and offer a breath of quietude before we go about our business in the more populated areas of the valley. Change is inevitable and conservation easements offer landowners a chance to stop the hands of time in many ways. The Snake River Ranch remains a dynamic place. In the course of one lifetime the operation has gone from a remote self-reliant outpost to an area surrounded by development. The constants are those green pastures protected by conservation easements and Bill’s devotion and affection for the Snake River Ranch.



**I enjoy trying to make a piece of ground work economically, agriculturally and environmentally.**

FLO MCCALL

# Mapping the Future of the Jackson Hole Land Trust

**A drive around Jackson Hole is a good way to understand the work of the Jackson Hole Land Trust, both the great accomplishments of the organization over the last 30 years, and the work that lies ahead.** Travel in any direction from town and you will see wide-open spaces, protected by thoughtful landowners with conservation easements. What drives the Jackson Hole Land Trust is the unprotected hayfields, the developable buttes, and the vulnerable corridors that wildlife depend on to reach Jackson Hole.

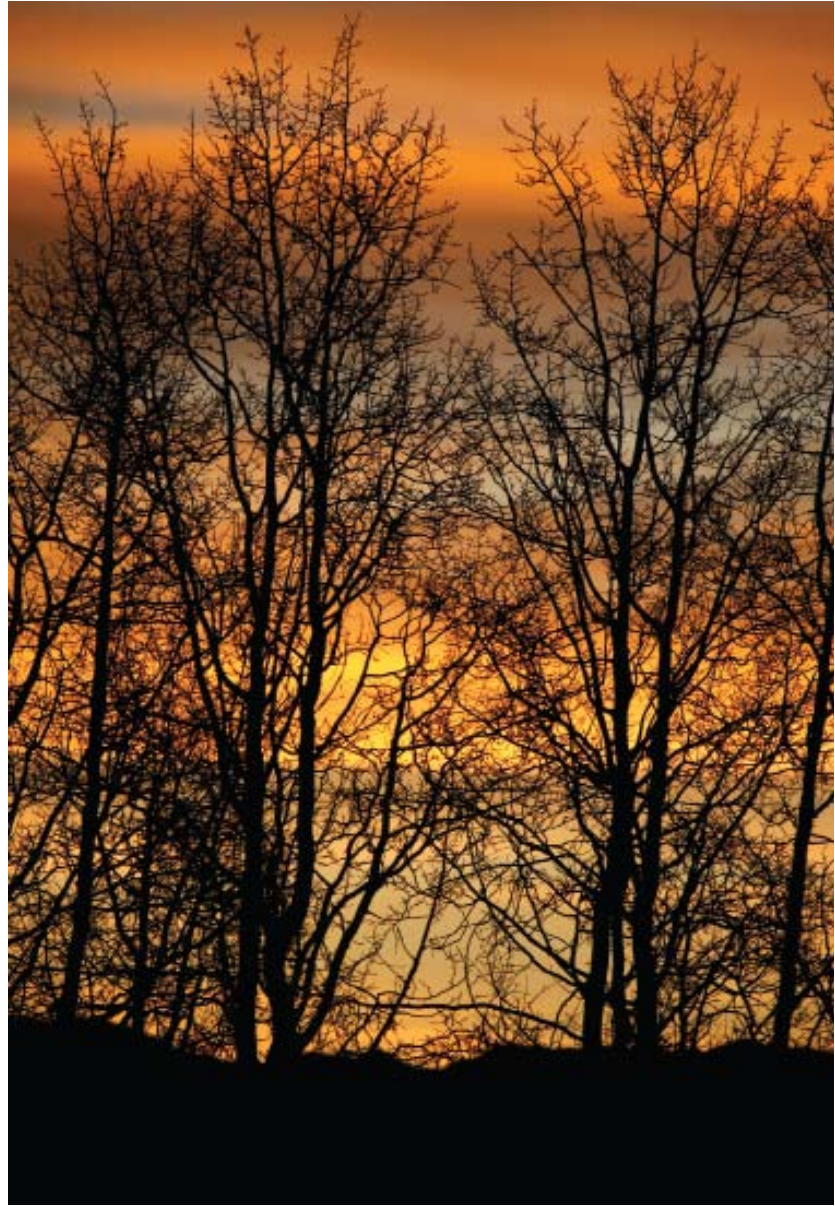
“When I drive through Spring Gulch or South Park, I am very aware of land that is not protected,” said Pete Lawton, Land Trust board president. “It became clear to the organization that if we did not strategize for the future, these and other character-defining landscapes could be nibbled away by development.”

Last summer, the board and staff of the Land Trust embarked on a strategic planning process to envision how to best respond to open space protection in the valley and ensure the organization has the capacity to accomplish new projects and fulfill the land stewardship responsibilities.

The plan places a new emphasis on public outreach and connecting the wider community with the personal stories and ecological value of the protected lands.

“Protecting noteworthy properties in the next five years is going to require community support,” said Laurie Andrews, executive director. “We know that the Jackson Hole community values open space, but what we recognized this summer is that we need to connect that sentiment to our current projects on a day-to-day basis.”

**Protecting noteworthy properties in the next five years is going to require community support.**



In response to a growing need for land conservation outside of Teton County, the Jackson Hole Land Trust has begun efforts to conserve the private lands of Park, Lincoln, and Fremont counties that support the ecology of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, of which Jackson Hole is part.

“We believe it is our responsibility to ensure the lands that support the abundant wildlife of Jackson Hole are effectively protected” said Andrews. “The animals we hold dear don’t know where the Teton County line ends or begins and are dependent on lands beyond this valley for their well being.” Focusing on wildlife corridors, the Land Trust will assist conservation efforts in Park and Lincoln counties by providing easement education outreach and technical advice and will continue to maintain the Wind River Program field office in Dubois.

Plan in hand, the Land Trust board and staff now begin the exciting work of implementation. Its goals are ambitious, but the future of Jackson Hole’s open lands depends on its success. ■



Please visit our website at [www.jhlandtrust.org](http://www.jhlandtrust.org) for a full description of the five-year strategic plan goals.

## From the director

### Embarking on the Jackson Hole Land Trust's strategic plan with my staff and board has been an energizing and insightful process.

Taking time to reflect on where we have been and articulate a clear vision for where we are headed has been immensely valuable. I am grateful for the dedicated staff and board we have here at the Jackson Hole Land Trust. What strikes me even more is the skill, acumen, and support that this 30-year-old Land Trust has developed through its time-honored methods. The Land Trust is revered in many circles, both regionally and nationally, as a thoughtful, effective, and knowledgeable institution. It is written in the stories of landowners, in the movement of elk, and in the preservation of what is wild. I remain mindful that the hallmark of our success has been our ability to remain apolitical while also keeping our finger on the pulse of local, state, and federal politics. With this tremendous reputation, and our strategic goals in place, I am thrilled to move the organization into the future. By responding to the growing need for technical expertise in our surrounding counties, to securing long term funding sources, the reach and capability of the Jackson Hole Land Trust are great. We are charting some new territory while remaining committed to the heart of our work.

—Laurie Andrews  
Executive Director



Laurie charting her own new territory on a hike to Tiger's Nest in Bhutan.

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# Welcome New Board Members

## Bill Adams

Bill graduated from Stanford University with a degree in economics and from the University of Utah College of Law with a Juris Doctor degree. He worked as a corporate attorney with O'Melveny & Myers for 35 years—and was partner in charge of the firm's Paris office for six years. Bill and his wife, Barbara, have vacationed in Jackson Hole since 1982 and became full-time residents in 2004. Bill volunteers as a ski host at the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort and as a docent at the National Museum of Wildlife Art.

## Ann Frame

Ann Frame has lived in Jackson for twenty years. She grew up in western Pennsylvania, attended Brown University, and earned an MBA from Wharton Business School. Before coming to Jackson she worked at Lazard Freres in asset management in New York City. Ann previously served on the board of the Land Trust from 2001 to 2007. Her unwavering commitment to preserving the open space in this community will once again be a welcome addition to the board.

## Scott Pierson

Scott Pierson is the president and co-founder, with his wife Lisa Pierson, of Pierson Land Works. Scott previously served as a Jackson Hole Land Trust board member from 1997-2005,

including a term as president. His long-term relationship with the Land Trust and 35 years of experience in land planning and management are valuable assets to the board.

## Mandy Mahoney

Mandy lives with her husband, George, on a conservation easement protected horse farm in northern Baltimore County Maryland. First visiting Wyoming in 1967, Mandy and George split time between their homesteaded ranch in Dubois and Teton Village. Mandy owned and operated her own group of American Craft Galleries. Mandy enjoys gardening, fishing, running, rowing, skiing, tennis, and spending time with her grandchildren. She is currently the president of the GCA Garden Club of Twenty in Baltimore, MD and sits on the board of the Otsego Land Trust Committee in Cooperstown, NY.

## Jarad Spackman

Jarad is an associate broker at Sotheby's International Realty. He grew up in Jackson and graduated from University of Colorado with a degree in international finance. After college, his love of the mountains brought him back to the valley. He loves to rock climb and mountain bike in the summer and backcountry ski and snowboard in the winter. When he is not spending time in the in the mountains he is at home with his wife and two dogs.

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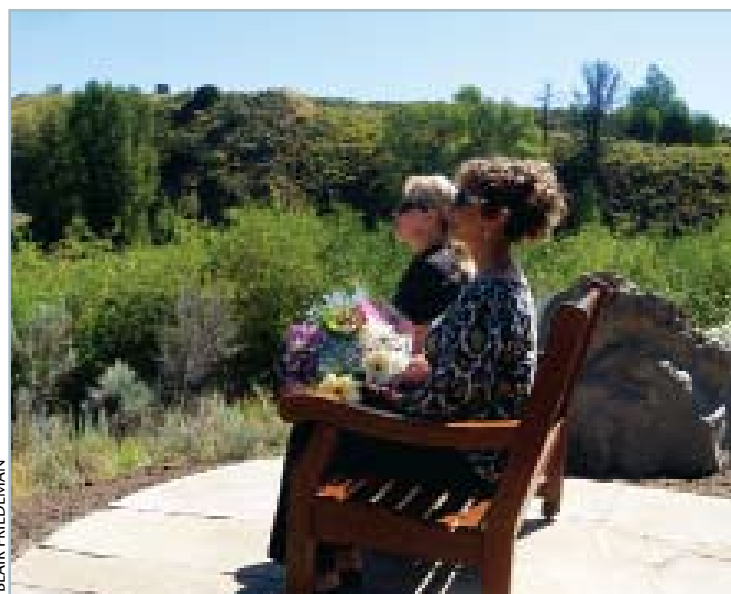
We apologize for any errors or omissions we have made. Please call us at (307) 733-4707 for corrections. This is a list of supporters who made a gift between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010.



## Remembering Leonard Rifkin

**When Leonard Rifkin was sitting quietly and looking at the Tetons, all thoughts of work would disappear.**

“My husband was a type A person. When he was in Jackson Hole he would tell me how he felt truly relaxed. We always felt that God lived in Jackson Hole,” said his widow Ari Rifkin. Ari made a gift to the Land Trust in memory of Leonard to support the work of preserving open space. For a man who felt total peace when sitting still in Jackson Hole, it was suiting that a pine bench be placed in his honor at Emily’s Pond for others to enjoy. Ari serves on many boards in Palm Beach, Florida, including Palm Beach Opera, Pops, and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Locally she is on the board of the Grand Teton Music Festival. When in Jackson Hole, Ari enjoys driving home via the Moose-Wilson road after the summer concerts and taking in the solitude. Ari’s contributions will help preserve the character-defining open space of Jackson Hole, where she and her husband spent some of their most carefree days together.



BLAIR FRIEDEMANN

Ari and her sister Ronit Josephson enjoying the new bench at Emily’s Pond.

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# THE BIGGER PICTURE: Protecting the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

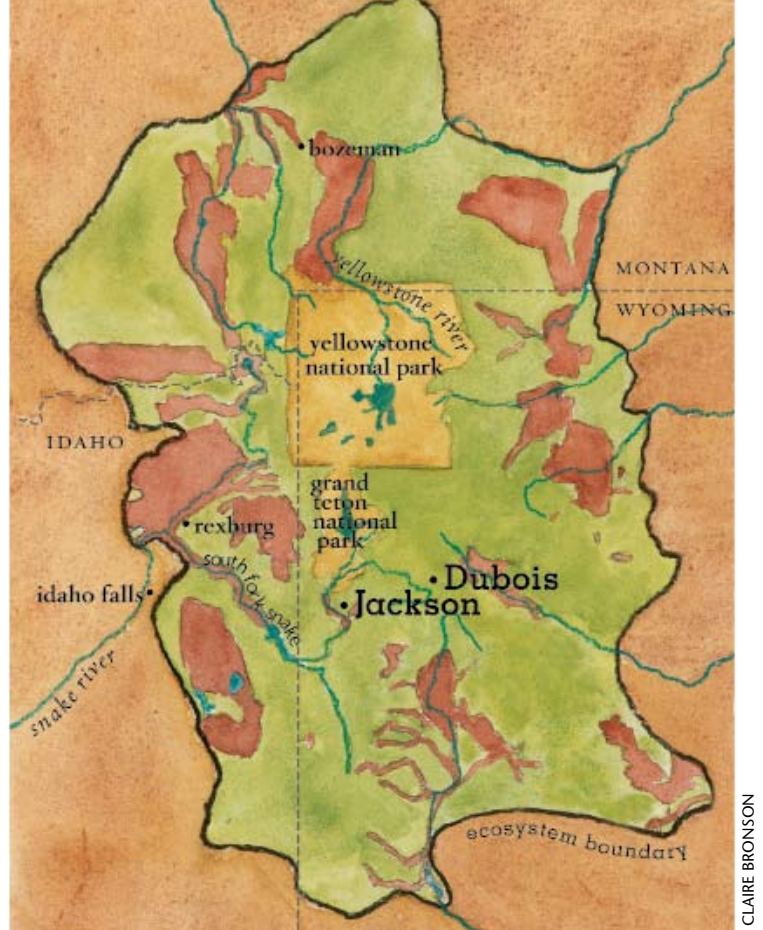
**Most often when we see wildlife, we are only seeing a small snapshot of the whole picture.**

We may see them munching on willows down by the river, but where did they bed down for a nap? Where do they go in February when the cold winds howl? When we see pronghorn foraging in the sage or startle a herd of cow elk with their small red calves in a shady fir forest in early summer; we are witnessing just a small portion of daily and seasonal movements that can span hundreds of miles. The individual animals we glimpse are part of an intricate web that stretches from western Wyoming through southwest Montana to eastern Idaho.

These animals are interdependent with other species. They require a diversity of terrain and soil. These creatures need large blocks of unfragmented habitat so they can ride out natural disturbances, changes in population dynamics, and migrate when the season dictates. The lone moose, the imperial bighorn sheep, or the herd of pronghorn you may glimpse are part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and are dependent on the dynamic equilibrium that exists within its boundaries. This ecosystem exists across both federal and private land; it spreads over multiple state and county boundaries. For the whole system to remain intact, the water, air, and animals all have to move across the landscape, through parcels of privately held land, and over a jigsaw of land jurisdictions.

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem concept was originally conceived when the grizzly bear was declared an endangered species. Put forth by Frank and John Craighead, the notion was to encapsulate the extensive home range of the bear across a variety of land agencies to help coordinate conservation efforts. The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is the only

**The individual animals we glimpse are part of an intricate web that stretches from western Wyoming through southwest Montana to eastern Idaho.**



CLAIRE BRONSON

remaining intact ecosystem in the lower 48 states, meaning that all the plants and animals originally found in this ecosystem are still present today. From ancient predator-prey relationships, to the movement of the same bird species for thousands of years through the same river bottoms, the cycles have persisted even into the modern era.

“The fact that the last remaining large movements of mammals have disappeared in all but a few places in North America drives home the urgency of conservation within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. No single portion of it can stand-alone and remain intact. Conservation of this rare thing, of which Jackson Hole is an integral part, requires coordinated protection efforts to take place throughout the entire Greater Yellowstone area,” said Tom Segerstrom, staff biologist for the Land Trust.

“If we are going to preserve and protect the wildlife that makes Jackson Hole unique, then we have to recognize the role that lands outside the valley play in supporting the health of those populations,” said Laurie Andrews, executive director for the Land Trust. “That doesn’t mean we shift our focus from Jackson Hole, but it does mean we have to identify those landscapes that are essential to the system as a whole and work to preserve them.”

In an effort to protect the entire ecological picture for the creatures that share our home, the Land Trust has begun working to conserve private lands outside of Teton County that are integral to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. For more information on the Land Trust’s conservation efforts in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem please see page four regarding the strategic plan. ■



TIMOTHY C. MAYO



DEB ROBINETT

## Protection in the Dunoir Valley

**In the shade of cottonwoods along Six Mile Creek, amid a tangle of underbrush and grass,** sit two weathered Adirondack chairs, silvered by the elements and blended so perfectly into the scene they seem to have grown from it. This is where Bob and Mary Lou McGee often sit in the evening, absorbing the solitude of their idyllic location in the heart of the Dunoir Valley.

The Dunoir Valley west of Dubois is renowned habitat for nearly all species found in the northern Rockies, including grizzly bear, wolves, lynx, trumpeter swans, bald eagles, and peregrine falcons. The McGee's secluded 14 acres straddle a vital migration corridor between summer and winter range. Their recognition of the property's value as protected open space and wildlife habitat led to them to donate a conservation easement on the entire property.

Bob spent many summers in the Dunoir Valley as a boy. His father, Gale W. McGee, left his position as a history professor at the University of Wyoming to serve in the US Senate from 1959 - 1977. Senator McGee purchased the property in 1972 as a family refuge from his public life. Bob and Mary Lou continue to cherish the tranquility and simplicity of life at the end of six miles of bad dirt road, the prolific wildlife, the protective curve of the Absaroka Mountains.

## Key Parcel in Heart of Town Protected

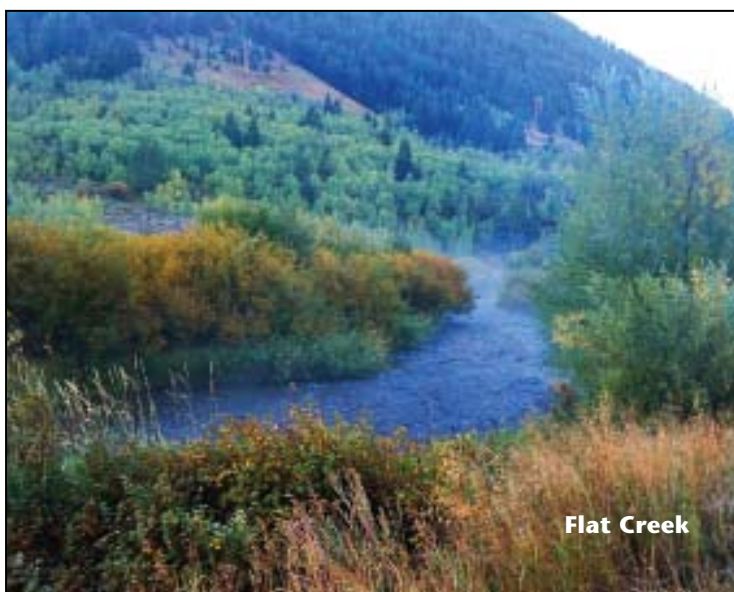
**Flat Creek serves as a conduit for wild species and creates ecological connectivity between the north and south end of the valley.** Birds, fish and other wildlife utilize this riparian corridor to travel safely through town. In a partnership, the Town of Jackson and Jackson Hole Land Trust have permanently protected an important 40-acre parcel at the base of Snow King Mountain that contains one mile of the creek. The project is adjacent to the 41 protected acres of Karns Meadow and allows for passage of wildlife from Karns Meadow along the base of Snow King.

This property is within the county's Natural Resource Overlay (NRO), which indicates its elevated ecological function. It is home to beavers, river otters, red fox, raptors, mule deer, moose and black bears among other riparian-supported species. Protection of this riparian area will help support water quality and flood control improvements as well as cutthroat trout habitat.

Additionally, this parcel is of high recreational value to the local community. Protection of this land ensures that the access routes to many popular hiking and biking trails, including Josie's Ridge and the KC trails, remain available.

This property was identified as highly developable, due to its in-town location. When it came on the market, both the town and the Land Trust knew it was a high priority to protect because of its ecological and recreational significance. The project will be completed through a phased process over the next four years with the town owning the land and the Land Trust holding the conservation easement. The Land Trust is seeking \$475,000 to complete the financing for the project.

**This partnership with the Town of Jackson protects an in-town parcel that is both ecologically and recreationally important.**



Flat Creek

BLAIR FRIEDMAN

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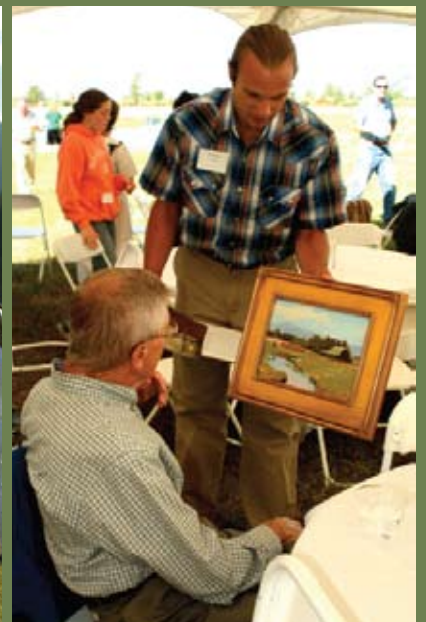
keep up with our work at [jhlandtrust.org](http://jhlandtrust.org)



## SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, August 14<sup>th</sup>

The Annual Jackson Hole Land Trust Picnic  
— *A Community Celebration of Wide Open Spaces*



PICNIC PHOTOS BY MARY GERTY