



## JACKSON HOLE LAND TRUST NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 2009

Contact: Laurie Andrews, 307-733-4707 or [laurie@jhlandtrust.org](mailto:laurie@jhlandtrust.org)

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### **Jackson Hole Land Trust Receives \$300,000 Grant from the Wildlife Trust Fund**

**Jackson Hole, Wyoming** – The Jackson Hole Land Trust is thrilled to be the recipient of a \$300,000 grant from the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust for the permanent protection of Ring Lake Ranch in Fremont County, Wyoming.

“We are incredibly honored to receive funding. It feels great to have the support of the statewide community, which the wildlife trust represents, behind our efforts in Fremont County,” said Peggy Gilday, Jackson Hole Land Trust board president.

The Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust received 37 grant requests and awarded \$5.3 million to 28 of the requesting organizations. The Jackson Hole Land Trust was awarded the full amount of its request for the project in Dubois.

The Ring Lake Ranch project, which is coordinated by the Jackson Hole Land Trust’s Wind River Program, will conserve over 400 acres of critical wildlife habitat at the base of Whiskey Mountain near Dubois. The property serves as vital winter habitat for the over 340 bighorn sheep that comprise the legendary Whiskey Mountain Herd. Elk are also dependent on the property during winter months, and it is designated high-quality winter range for mule deer.

Numbering more than 2,000 individuals, the Whiskey Mountain herd was once the largest herd of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the world. It is hoped that the conservation of this key piece of habitat will contribute to a rebound of the herd’s population.

The project will also protect a number of artifacts of early indigenous cultures located on the ranch, including teepee mounds and petroglyphs.

The funds will go toward the purchase of a conservation easement on the ranch, limiting future development of the property. Because of its size, the grant must still be approved by the Wyoming state legislature later this month.

“The Ring Lake Ranch project is a tremendous opportunity for us to further the conservation of this amazing area,” said Laurie Andrews, executive director of the

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Jackson Hole Land Trust. "We are very excited about the work the Wind River Program is accomplishing."

The Wind River Program, a program of the Jackson Hole Land Trust, was initiated in 2007 with the purpose of supporting the Dubois community in conserving the upper Wind River watershed. To date the Land Trust has worked to conserve over 1,300 acres in the Dubois area.

In November 2008, longtime resident of Dubois, Ellen Vanuga, took over as director of the Wind River Program. "This job is a chance to combine my respect and appreciation for this community with my love of the land," said Vanuga. "I can't think of a better place and better people to learn from than right here in Dubois where we have so much at stake."

The Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust was started in 2005 by the Wyoming legislature with the goal of funding the enhancement and conservation of wildlife habitats and the natural resource values throughout the state.

The Jackson Hole Land Trust is a private, non-profit organization that works to protect the scenic, ranching and wildlife values of Teton County and the surrounding areas. Since its inception in 1980, the Jackson Hole Land Trust has protected over 20,000 acres of open lands in and around Jackson Hole. For more information please visit [www.jhlandtrust.org](http://www.jhlandtrust.org).