

open lands

news from the Jackson Hole Land Trust

SPRING/SUMMER 2007



Love of land,
Stories of place

What do you love about the land of Jackson Hole?



Mike Wardell, Barry Reiswig, Michelle and Melissa Slaughter, and Kathy Turner (left to right) take time to tell us about their love of this land.

This land holds the stories of its people. It is a playground, a canvas, a herd to be moved, a river to fish or mountains to climb. It is a land people fall in love with and a land to protect.

People come to Jackson Hole for a number of reasons; they stay because of the land. Some may be held by the uninterrupted rise of the Tetons from the valley floor. Others will speak of the empty meadow that stretches to the horizon, or the meandering Snake and its frigid, slate-gray waters. Some love a family cabin built of local spruce and perched in an old stand of aspen. Some cherish the freedom of the backcountry, where they roam every winter on skis or hunt the abundant game that thrives there. The Valley wins all kinds of people: wanderers, dreamers, gamblers, ranchers, entrepreneurs, athletes—and the rest of us. All have fallen under its spell, and when you ask them why they stay, almost always their answer is linked to the land.

In this issue of Open Lands, we talk with a handful of people who live on this land. They are people who love their place; their homeland, and want to see it preserved for future generations to enjoy. You can play here, earn a living here, raise a family, explore the mountains, or just look. What you see is worth protecting.





Mike Wardell ✨ In the southern end of Jackson Hole the buttes that seem to hug the town loosen their hold and give way to the sunny ranchlands. As you move north, you begin to encounter river bottom and haying fields, and further north still lays the increasingly rugged terrain of the Tetons. You can also trace the life of Mike Wardell along this valley.

In March of 1944, Mike Wardell, accompanied by his mother Gloria, was picked up at the Town Square by his grandfather Del Jenkins in a horse-drawn sleigh and taken back to the family ranch south of town. Mike's grandparents had honeymooned in Jackson Hole in 1906. Eventually, Mike's grandfather and his uncle, Byron Jenkins, returned in 1936 and pieced together 1,100 acres of prime cattle ranching land in South Park. As a young boy, Mike recalls a town of dirt roads, gamblers, and pockets full of silver dollars. In college he waited tables at the family's dude ranch resort called The Highlands, which was at the foot of the Tetons. With a lifetime of experiences in Jackson Hole, Mike brims with stories of the area. His expressive hands and kind blue

eyes tell tales of his family learning to ski on Snow King and skijoring behind Uncle Byron's car with cousin Kirby Williams on the way back to the ranch. "As beautiful as Jackson Hole is I have never been able to separate this valley from the people," remarked Mike. Adding, "There have been characters of great character in this place."

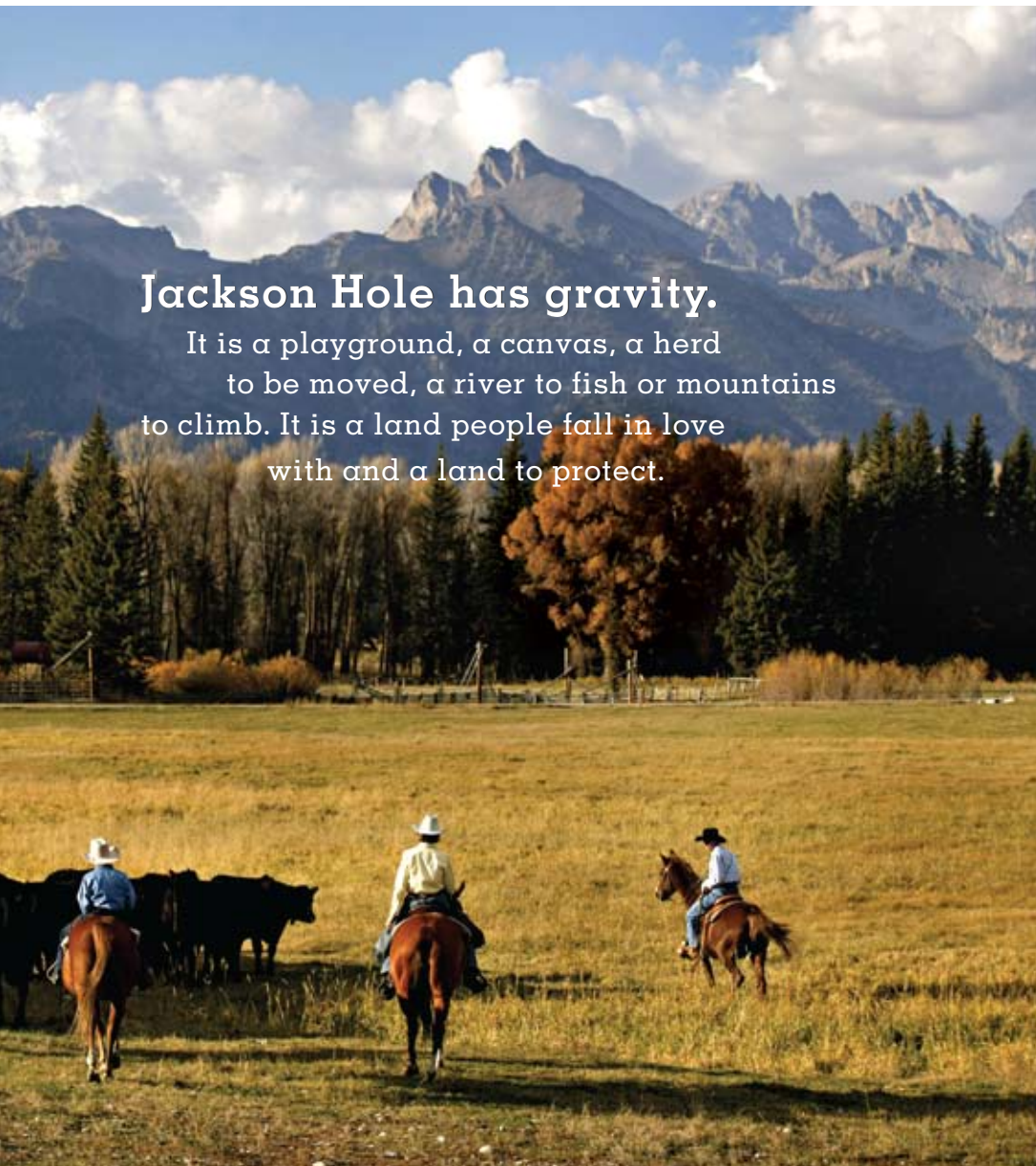
After time away from Jackson Hole for college and the Army, Mike returned to his home. "This isn't the center of the universe, but this is a special place God put together here. A magical place," smiles Mike as he reflects on his life in the valley. He enjoys how geologically unique Jackson Hole is with its flat valley rimmed by steep mountains and no foothills to ease you into the dramatic views. When

his guests express admiration for the Jenkins Ranch, Mike is quick to remind them that he had little to do with it and that "a power greater than myself set these pieces in place." Mike's aunt and uncle donated a conservation easement over a portion of their ranch in the 1970's to The Nature Conservancy. The easement was later transferred to the Jackson Hole Land Trust. Mike loves how the family enclave has not changed since he has known it, and will remain much the same in perpetuity. "I have such a peaceful feeling on that land that has been so generously offered to me," smiles Mike. On any given day at the ranch he sees over a dozen different species from elk to ermine and eagles to kingfishers. They remind him of the diversity of creatures with which he shares his home.

When asked to identify the one thing he really loves about the land of Jackson Hole through all of his time here he replies with a twinkle, "I love the way I have felt living here." He perfectly describes this intangible gift of the land as "an extraordinary soup of natural beauty." ✨

Jackson Hole has gravity.

It is a playground, a canvas, a herd to be moved, a river to fish or mountains to climb. It is a land people fall in love with and a land to protect.



Michelle and Melissa Slaughter ✧ These sisters are visibly at ease with their environment.

Having lived half of their young lives in Jackson Hole, each has a unique perspective on the land of this region. Not many kids in elementary school immediately recognize the value of open lands and have the word ‘habitat’ readily available in their vocabulary the way these two do. They both attend the Journeys School. Michelle is 9 years old and in the 3rd grade and Melissa is 11 and enrolled in 5th. The girls were quick to answer when asked what is special about the land of Jackson Hole.

“I like it because animals can have habitat. Some places animals don’t have any room to play, but here they do,” stated Michelle

Melissa concurred, “I like how it’s so open and wild looking and wildlife can have room to be.”

Within minutes of asking them about the land of Jackson Hole, both girls lit up with stories about their many encounters with the wildlife they see from their home. The girls have a bluebird box near their play yard that hosts a family of birds every year. They also have had an owl perch atop their chimney, funneling his hoot down into their house for them to hear. The girls have seen a badger in their yard eating the Uinta ground squirrels. Melissa said she was good at identifying some animals, but was not so good at identifying tracks or sounds.

Michelle and Melissa had numerous stories to share about their naturalist observations around their home. Playing with the local insects is an especially enjoyable outdoor activity for these two. Melissa recalled going up to the Teton Science School Campus before any buildings were constructed and

catching swallowtail butterflies. “Last summer we were ready with our nets but it was not a good year for butterflies,” Michelle noted astutely. Michelle describes going up to High School Butte with string and scissors and trying to find leaves to fashion into kites. The natural world is one of their best playmates. They also recounted a tadpole relocation project from a puddle in their back yard into the mighty Snake River. “There are frogs in the Snake now that we put there,” Melissa remarked enthusiastically.

“I can predict how many red-tailed hawks there will be on the fence posts as we drive to and from school. They just line the road sometimes,” observed Melissa.

Living alongside their animal friends, the girls are highly in tune with the seasons and creatures that make this place home. “Summer is my favorite because it is warm and green and fun and I get to play outside with bare feet,” stated Michelle.

When asked to pick just one word to describe Jackson Hole, “Beautiful” and “Wild” came rolling off their tongues. What a fortunate way to be able to describe your home. ✧



KIM FADIMAN



TIM MAYO

Kathy Turner ✨ **“I love my life!” beams Kathy Turner, when asked about her connection to the land of Jackson Hole.**

“I have tried to live other places but this land is what roots me.” Kathy does have a fortunate birthright and hails from a long tradition of space and land. Her grandparents laid the foundation when they purchased the Triangle X Ranch in Moose from a homesteader 80 years ago. “I am so grateful my grandparents fell under the spell of Jackson. They were ranchers in Utah and would come to Jackson to vacation in the summer while the grass was growing and keeping the cattle fat at home. When Triangle X came up for sale they were right there ready to move in.”

“When we were kids we ran unfettered over the land. We scattered to the wind with freedom to explore the land and, in turn, ourselves. My mom would just hope for our return at dark.” Kathy grew up in a house with a view of the Tetons. When she was a young girl, on a foggy morning she ran to her mother in tears exclaiming that someone stole the mountains. Since her formative years she has been deeply attached to this place. “My heart is here,” states Kathy, in her calm, radiant demeanor. Kathy possesses a spiritual connection to the land of Jackson Hole, made evident by her visibly glowing gratitude for her life here.

Kathy pays tribute to her love of the land through her art. “I had to find a way to express my love of this place, and

since I am not a writer I started painting.” She recalls getting her first nice watercolor set at the age of twelve and has since become a prominent and nationally recognized artist. Inherent to Kathy’s work is being outside in the landscape with her brushes. She notices a profound difference between her obligatory indoor-created winter works and her plein air paintings. With easel on her back and brushes in her hand, Kathy rambles freely through her beloved homeland seeking to capture the light of this unique valley. Kathy is an artist because she grew up here and notes that the land all but asked her to paint. Kathy exudes her reverence for this land in both her artwork and demeanor. “This land lends itself to artistic expression. This land is sublime.” ✨



JOHN TURNER

Barry Reiswig ✨ **Barry Reiswig is passionate about conservation and has made it his life’s work.**

The south boundary fence of the Elk Refuge sits just outside of his office window. He was told by his predecessor that he would be judged by where the fence line was at the end of his tenure. With just a few months left in his job until retirement, the fence line has not budged. Barry has been the manager of the Elk Refuge since 1996. He describes his job as “encouraging people to do the right thing.”

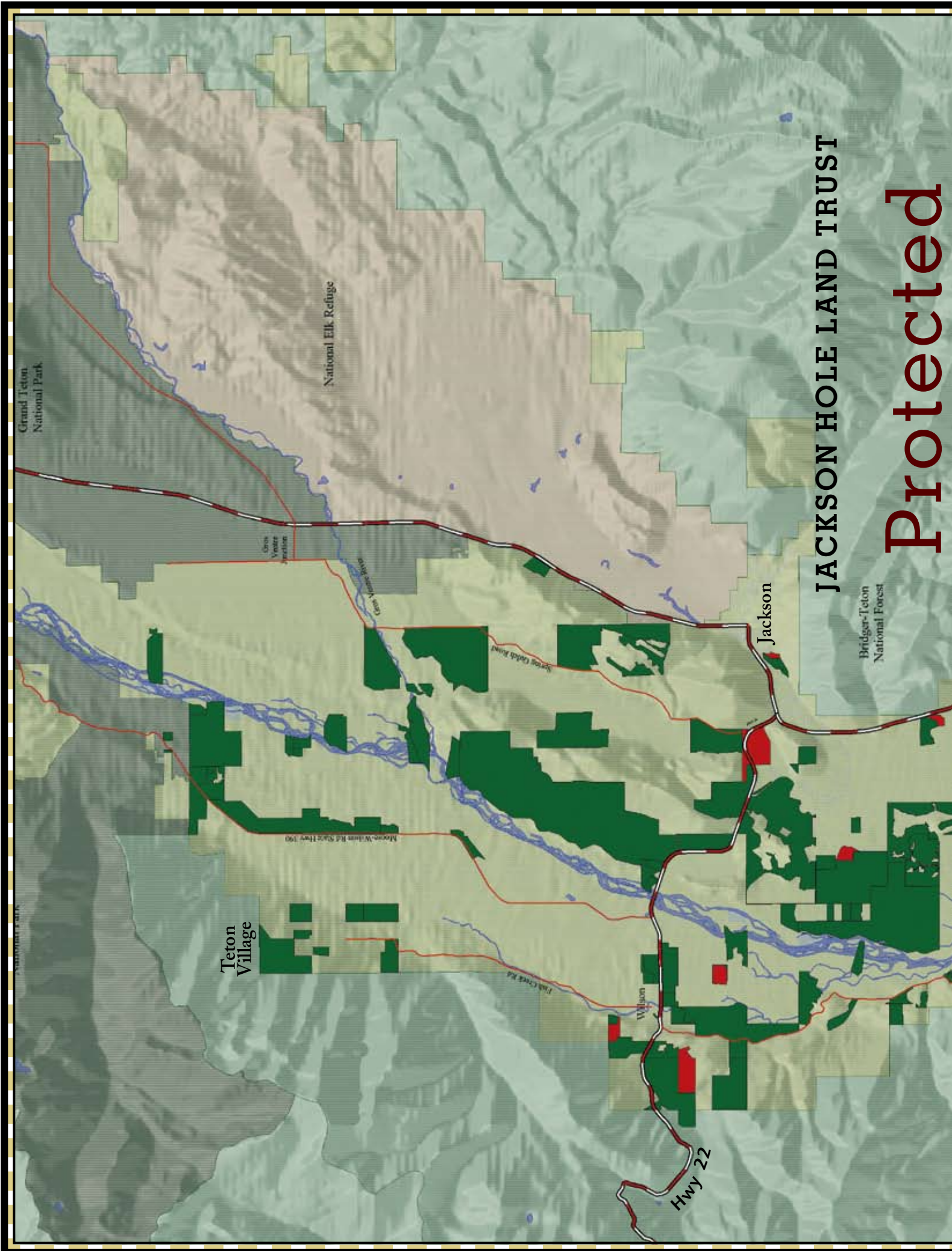
“Conserved land, be it for the Refuge or under easement with the Land Trust, has values far beyond the boundaries of the tract. Conserved lands keep the rural character of Jackson Hole intact.” With a sparkle in his blue eyes, Barry goes on to explain how he sees conserved lands helping cap traffic issues, commercial endeavors and other congesting infrastructure that could develop in Jackson. He sees land conservation as a lasting contribution that keeps paying. “When you think about it, the Land Trust has protected as much land as what lies within the Elk Refuge boundary. That is a major contribution to conservation in this area,” offers Barry.

Having lived in Jackson Hole for eleven years, Barry has a deep-seated affection for the land here. “I love living in a valley surrounded by mountains. The unique history, stunning views, and easy mountain access make this place very livable.” He enjoys the peace and quiet of Jackson Hole. He treasures how effortless it is to get away from people and immerse oneself into the wild lands that are just a stone’s throw from town. “Livable” restates Barry, a grand smile spreading across his face. ✨

“When you think about it, the Land Trust has protected as much land as what lies within the Elk Refuge boundary.”



KIM FADIMAN



Grand Teton
National Park

National Elk Refuge

Gros
Ventre
Section

SNAKE RIVER

Snake Falls Road

Moose-Waters Rd
State Hwy 190

Teton
Village

Fish Creek Rd

Wilson

Hwy 22

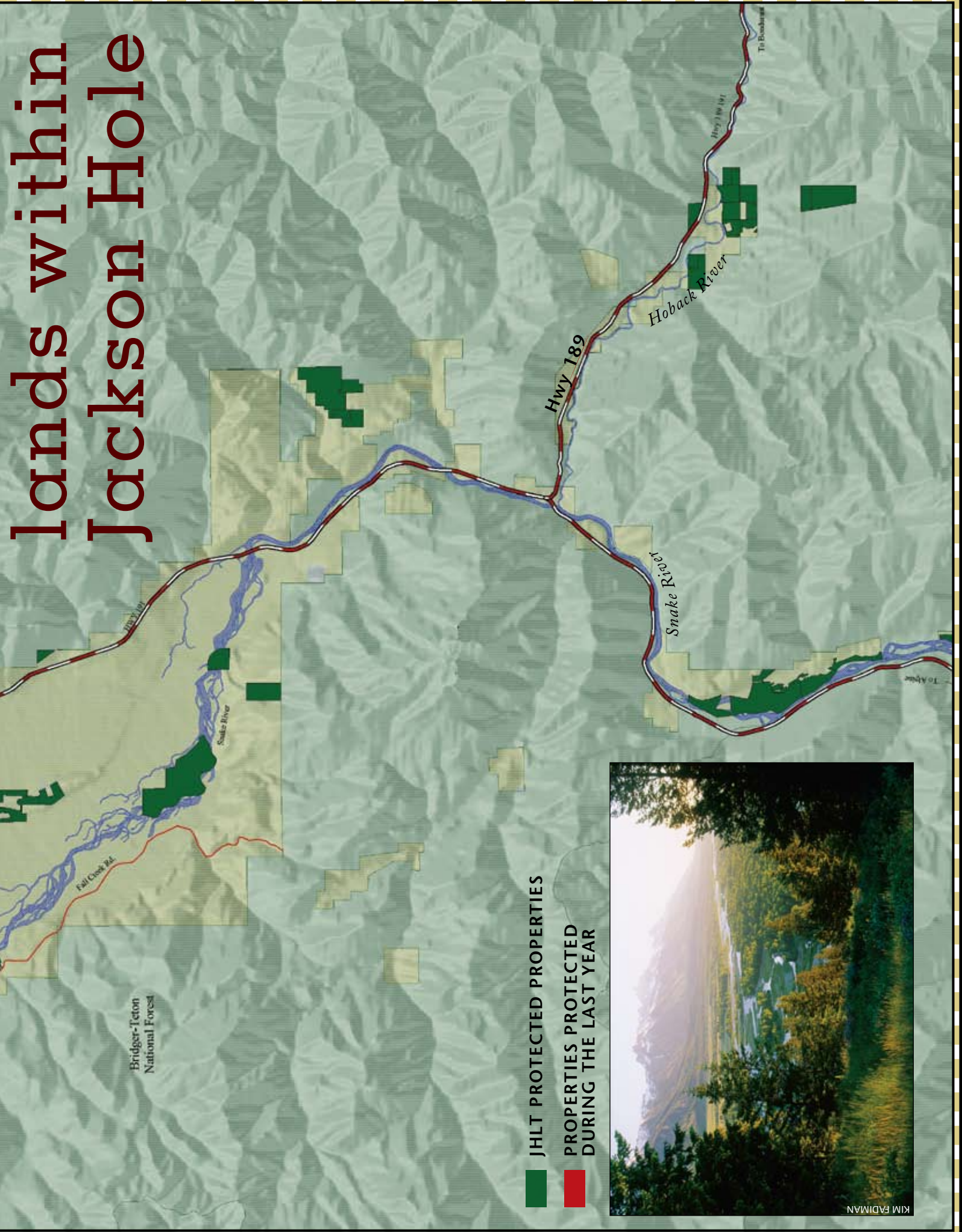
Jackson

Bridger-Teton
National Forest

JACKSON HOLE LAND TRUST

Protected

lands within Jackson Hole



KIM FADIMAN

A place filled with stories



FLO McCALL

Talking to anyone who has settled here, you find that the land is at the core of their attachment to Jackson Hole. The power of place is intimately tied to the story of people, and their relationship to the land. Members of this community bring the landscape alive; the personal histories contained within these lands add richness to this place. Be it a brand new arrival or a third-generation family, living here we find a common love of wild and a love of open through the multitude of outdoor experiences this place has to offer. Over time the land begins to shape our character and gift us with stories.

The Jackson Hole Land Trust has helped safeguard some character-defining properties in this character-defining landscape, ensuring these stories of humans and their land do not disappear. Protecting these stories is a vital function of the Land Trust, for we believe the health of a working landscape ties directly into the well being of the community. So we encourage you to answer the question, what do you love about the land of Jackson Hole? Please join us in caring for the stories of our community, held within these lands.

Over time the land begins to shape our character and gift us with stories

Board of Directors

Clayton Andrews
Cathryn Brodie
Bill Campbell
John Carney
Kelly Lockhart
James Flood
Ann Frame
Peggy Gilday
Bob Grady
Mark Hershberger
Pam Johnson
Clarene Law
Pete Lawton
Heidi Leeds
Paul Lowham
Bill Maloney
Thomas Muller
Mimi Slaughter

Erin Dann
Michael Daus
Chris Denny
A.J. DeRosa
Mark Feldman
Annie Fenn
Gavin Fine
Harrison Ford
Mary Gerty
Mike Gierau
Marshall Gingery
Tom Glassberg
David Gonzales
Sabrina Gracias
Mike Halpin
Ann Harvey
Chris Hawks
Jeff Heilbrun
Lynn Hitschler

Susie McDowell
Brad Mead
Charlotte Oliver
Jerry O'Rourke
Trina Overlock
Lewis Parker
Louise Parzick
Bob Peters
Aaron Pruzan
Stan Resor
Joel Revill
Will Rigsby
Al Ringer
Jon Rotenstreich
Vida Sanchez
Veronica Silberberg

Emeritus Directors

Vince Lee
Gil Ordway
Scott Pierson
Allan Tessler
Mike Wardell

Jean Hocker
Bland Hoke
Tom Kalishman
Pete Karns
Joan Kelleher
Samara Koffler
Ed Krajsky
Beedee Ladd
Dave Larson
Van Leichter
Lety Liera
Nancy Luther
Tom Mann
Neal Manne
Carol Marshall
Holly McAllister-Swett
Porgy McClelland

Roger Smith
Samantha Smith
Liza Sperling
James Speyer
Carson Stanwood
Hank Stifel
Bob Strawbridge
Anna Sullivan
Brian Taylor
Julie Taylor
Georgene Tozzi
Johnnie Tozzi
Gary Trauner
Doug Wachob
Jarett Wait
David Walsh
Laurie Waterhouse
Lexey Wauters-Larson
Kirby Williams
Adam Wolfensohn

Open Space Council

Bill Adams
Roger Altman
Rich Anderson
Mandan Bozorgi
Renny Burke
Andy Calder
Betsy Carlin
Rani Clasquin
Mary Anne Cree
Kathleen Crowley
Julie D'Amours



MARY GERTY

Staff List

Laurie Andrews
Executive Director
Pam Case
Development Officer
Cindy Duncan
Bookkeeper
Nick Herzog
Development and Communications Associate

C. Timothy Lindstrom
Director of Protection; Staff Attorney
Michael Rauch
Associate Director of Protection
Adonia Ripple
Associate Director of Stewardship and Outreach
Tom Segerstrom
Land Steward; Staff Biologist

About the Jackson Hole Land Trust

The Jackson Hole Land Trust is a private, nonprofit organization that was established in 1980 to preserve the critical wildlife habitat, magnificent scenic vistas, and historic ranching heritage of Jackson Hole. By working cooperatively with the owners of the area's privately owned open lands, the Land Trust has ensured the permanent protection of nearly 18,000 acres in and around Jackson Hole. To learn more about protecting the open lands of Jackson Hole, visit our web site at www.jhlandtrust.org



Karns Meadow: Conservation Preserves Options

When thinking about conservation easements, the difference between preservation and conservation of land is an important distinction to make. Conservation of land has been loosely defined as wise use; taking into account the needs of the natural system in balance with the needs of humans. Preservation of land implies that nature should be maintained in its unaltered, pure, and primordial form with minimal influence from humans.

There is no mistake that conservation easements are called as such; protected land that incorporates wise use in concert with the land's natural systems. As the great conservationist Aldo Leopold wrote in *A Sand County Almanac* in 1949, "A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the community; and the community includes the soil, water, fauna and flora, as well as the people."

The Karns Meadow conservation easement is an excellent example of how conservation includes options for both the land and people. If the Karns Meadow tracts were slated for free-market residential development, the town would have lost an opportunity to engineer the critical storm water treatment system that improves Flat Creek and to enhance a key riparian habitat. As Flat Creek passes through town it becomes very polluted with street run-off. The creek is so impacted it was declared 'threatened' by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1992. As planned, and as facilitated by the conservation easement, the Town will be using the low-lying wetlands of the Karns Meadow natural park to biologically filter the runoff before it enters

A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the community; and the community includes the soil, water, fauna and flora, as well as the people.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, *A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC*

Flat Creek. "Flat Creek is a world class resource above and below Town that is directly connected to the Snake River fishery. By choosing not to develop the meadow, the Karns Family and our community kept alive the opportunity to make the entire Flat Creek drainage better. This park also retains some flexibility for flood control because it acts like a sponge to absorb flood water where there will be no

property damage. This project is the result of great collective wisdom," says Tom Segerstrom, wildlife biologist for the Land Trust.

Additionally, the conservation of Karns Meadow will create a public green space right in town. At the heart of these balanced options was the foresight of the Karns Family. When asked about his vision for the land Pete Karns stated, "The town has a wonderful opportunity to provide

multiple outdoor experiences for people right at their doorsteps. People who live in town now have the option to enjoy nature close to home."

No one can predict the future and how land in Jackson Hole will be needed. Conservation easements strike the balance between people and nature, helping preserve options in this age-old quest.

A Place in Mind



By Peter Forbes

There is mystery in how we have come to know this place that is not unlike the mystery of falling in love with someone. Eighteen months ago, we barely knew the boundaries of our farm or the source of our affections for it. We spent those first months putting our feet on its trails and our fingers in its soils, confident of its beauty and naive about its quality. Then there have been times when being here has felt entirely overwhelming, when we worried about our abilities and lost our sense of purpose, or when the land has felt uncomfortable like clothes that don't yet fit. We have been slowly growing into this land.

We agonized over which fields to hay, and then reveled in the greenness of the fields and the satisfaction of stacking the bales in our barn. We watched the springs dry up and came to know angst as a weather system. We are still frightened by the wind—so fierce on this hillside—but have learned to lean into it in the day and how to be held by it at night. We have studied the grass and moved our sheep through the pastures and thus come to know the pleasure of their nourishment. We have camped on the hilltop through heavy rains and

slept with the story that this mountain has felt a million such storms. We've waded through these fields with our soaked legs to watch the sun rise over a valley buried in fog. We've fed others and ourselves from this land, and now carry it in us wherever we go. Today, my eye is drawn to a familiar view of where the fields meet the sky and I wonder what it will be like to look upon this land when we are old and bent over. What started by chance has been now graced by intention. This land has become a marriage, but no less a mystery.



FRED JOY

We came here to engage and to serve differently, and we sense that knowing this place well leads us to where, in our best selves, we really want to go.



MARY GERTY



HOWARD STIRN



PETER FORBES

We came to this hillside in search of a more satisfying bond with the world around us: one about community, not isolation. We came here out of the growing recognition of what might nourish our family most. We came here to engage and to serve differently, and we sense that knowing this place well leads us to where, in our best selves, we really want to go. We want to trust and be trusted. We want to be firmly rooted here, independent and self-willed, with a sense of security that is as deep as the list of people we can call when things go wrong.

We all have relationships and some aren't good ones. We enter into them with the aspiration of being at our very best, but the truth is that we aren't always perfect. Often I fail. My relationship to this hillside is transforming me. It is teaching me how to pay closer attention, to go beyond what I see on the surface, to be more patient. I see that all we need is already at hand. I am slowly cultivating myself by attending to the particulars of the soil, the flow of water, the diversity of life, and the burden this land and we can carry. This land is filled with both seeds and ashes, and my struggle to understand both has made for a more mature love. Our relationship to this farm is about health and well being: the land's, our neighbors', and ours.

One late afternoon I walk across our high pasture when I see a bit of movement along the fence line. Then she emerges from the shadows, a black bear who walks purposefully out into the tall grass and across to a cherry tree. Her size and wildness takes my breath away. I watch from above until she smells me and retreats, leaving on the barbed wire a tangle of her fur that I now carry in a pouch. Her fur merges there with the wool of our Icelandic sheep until I can no longer tell them apart. I carry the pouch to remind me of all the sets of relationships, including my own, that are this land. Each day my love of this place becomes wildness inside of me, a reminder of my attachments to this world.

Peter Forbes is a photographer, author, farmer and co-founder of the Center for Whole Communities at Knoll Farm in Vermont's Mad River Valley. A life-long student of the relationship between land and people, Peter has worked throughout the world to record and protect the value of a strong human relationship with the land. For ten years, Peter led all of the land conservation undertaken by the Trust for Public Land in New England. In 1998, Peter became Trust for Public Land's first national fellow and devoted himself to researching and writing about how individual and community relationships with the land can become the seeds for broader social change. **For more information** on Peter's work and to order his books visit www.wholecommunities.org. We are grateful for permission to re-print his writing and photographs.

Save the Date:
August 12th, 2007

Jackson Hole Land Trust Annual Picnic

A Community Celebration of Wide Open Spaces

Join us to celebrate 27 years of
working together to protect open lands.

KIM FADIMAN



PHOTOS BY MARY GERTY

JACKSON HOLE



LAND TRUST

P.O. Box 2897
Jackson, WY 83001

Non-profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Permit No 79
Jackson, WY

To learn more about
protecting the open
lands of Jackson Hole,
visit our web site at
www.jhlandtrust.org