



*Photo: Alexandra Munger*



# OPEN LANDS

## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2022



# A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Photo: Flo McCarty

This corner of the world is known for its wildlife migrations. From the neotropical songbirds that fly thousands of miles each year to the ungulates who routinely break known distance records following the spring green-up then retreating from deep winter snowpack. Though these are the animals that make headlines (among certain circles), those that more or less stay put are also quite remarkable.

Animals that stay put in the winter must utilize strategies to deal with our harsh climates. Some animals simply avoid the difficult conditions: Uinta ground squirrels are typically only awake from hibernation for about three to four months before returning to their burrows in early August. Others, like our bison herds, are uniquely adapted to surviving our winters. Bison grow thicker coats with additional fat layers to insulate themselves from the cold and are able to forage in deep snows, using their powerful heads, necks, and shoulders to push aside snow.

In this newsletter, you can learn more about how strategic conservation easements safeguard habitat for those species that winter closer to home. You'll also read about the people and projects who breathe life into this community throughout the freeze. And whether you're here year-round or enjoying someplace warmer like the mule deer and pronghorn that will return in the spring, you can rest assured knowing our open spaces remain, in trust, for you and your family to return to year after year.

Sincerely,

**Max Ludington**  
President

## MISSION

**The Jackson Hole Land Trust is a private nonprofit that was established in 1980. We work to protect and steward the treasured landscapes of Northwest Wyoming.**

## VISION

**Our vision is a legacy of protected open spaces, wildlife habitat, working lands, and community spaces across Northwest Wyoming that inspire current and future generations.**

**Twin Creek Ranch Road**  
40 Acres  
Protected Since 2021  
Photo: Zach Andres

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## IN MEMORY:

### ANN FRAME BEDDOW



With a passion for conservation and an incredible work ethic, Ann was an influential member of the board of directors. Ann served four terms on the board, beginning in 2001. Her intellect, charm, and charisma helped to guide the organization through difficult decisions and strategic growth. Ann was one of a kind and will be dearly missed.

### CLARENE LAW



Clarene was an absolute force of nature with a vision and passion for conserving Jackson Hole. Her involvement with the Jackson Hole Land Trust was an extension of her love for the community. Well known for her business acumen and sincere kindness, Clarene served two terms on the JHLT's board of directors beginning in 2005.

### PAUL LOWHAM



Paul brought a passion for stewardship and wealth of real estate knowledge to the board. His commitment to conservation was borne out of his extensive experience owning and improving habitat on ranches throughout Wyoming. A fourth-generation Wyomingite, his knowledge and love of the state was unmatched. Paul's two terms began in 2002.



# CLOSER TO HOME: THE JACKSON HOLE ELK HERDS

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The elk are a large part of the reason we're all enjoying Jackson Hole for what it is today. My family looks forward to watching them bugle in the fall and calve in the spring, and riding amongst them on horseback in the summertime. These inspiring creatures make us want to work to keep the ranch operating with a mind for conservation.

- Turner Resor, Snake River Ranch

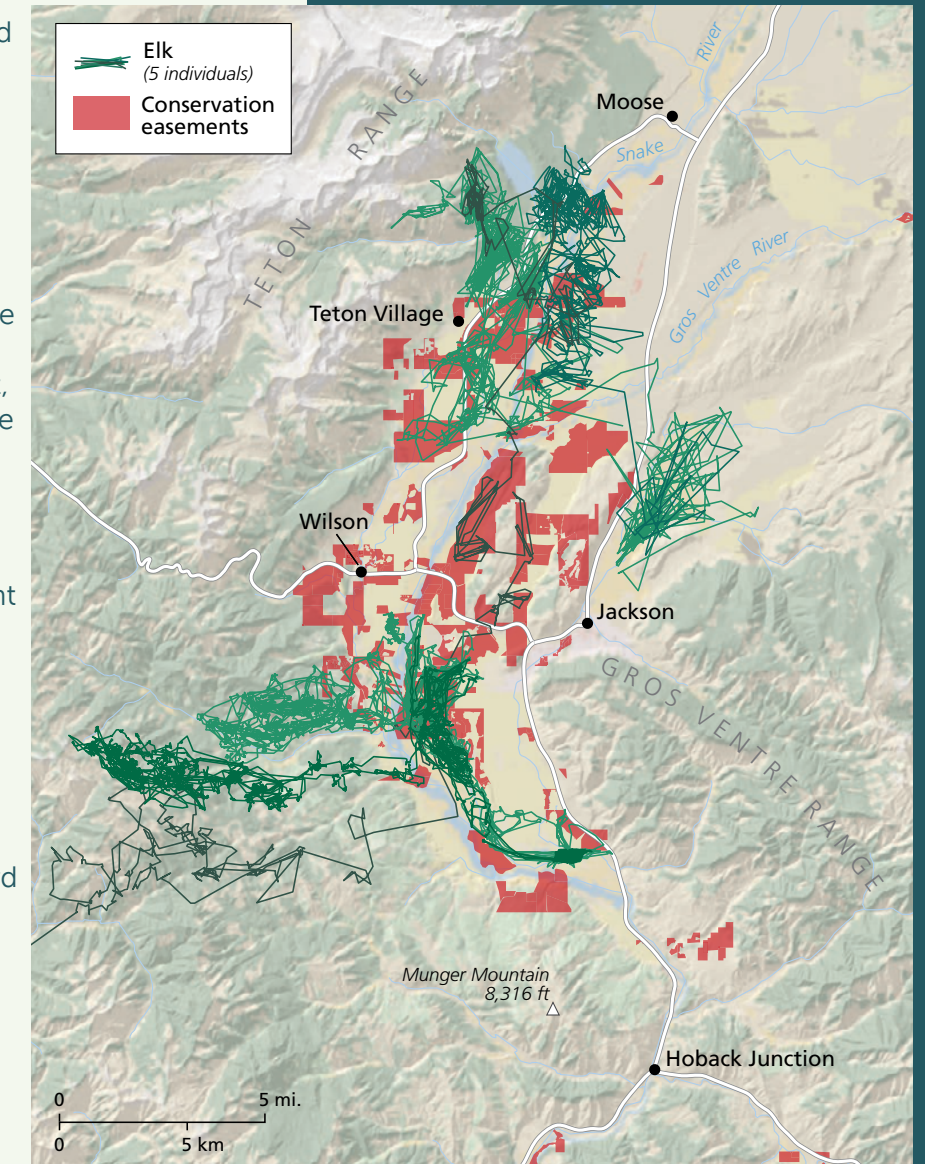
The history of modern-day Jackson Hole is rooted in the health of the local elk herd. Native peoples relied on the abundant elk for sustenance before the valley became the epicenter of guided elk hunts in the early 1900s when overhunting and habitat degradation decimated elk populations in the rest of the country. The Town of Jackson's famous elk arches were, and remain, a testament to the importance of elk to the local identity. The health of the Jackson Hole elk herd has always been linked to the abundant habitat in the valley.

“People come from across America and from around the world to see wildlife in the park, Jackson Hole, and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem,” says Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Chip Jenkins. “To continue to have sustainable populations of these spectacular animals, from pronghorn, elk, and deer to grizzly bears, means we need to work collaboratively to make sure they have access to winter habitat, summer habitat, and the ability to move between.”

Strategic conservation easements do just that. Private lands surrounding Grand Teton National Park and adjacent to Bridger-Teton National Forest safeguard important habitat for all types of wildlife species, especially in the winter months when deep snow brings animals like elk down from the mountains.

Subgroups of the Jackson Hole elk herd typically spend their winter months in higher elevation habitats, some as far away as northern Grand Teton and southern Yellowstone and some as close by as the slopes right next to the valley floor. When the deep snows of winter start to set in in the mountains, all these elk groups move to the valley floor to find food. While the distances of these migrations vary, all of the Jackson Hole elk herds are dependent on well-stewarded private lands and open space to access the critical habitats they need.

The JHLT has partnered with numerous families to safeguard this important habitat. The more than 3,100 acres under easement with the Snake River Ranch protects a variety of habitat types for local elk and ensures connectivity on the western parts of the valley. From our first conservation easement on R Lazy S that now totals 349 acres to our latest 40-acre easement on Twin Creek Ranch Road that connects the National Elk Refuge to the Bridger-Teton National Forest, the JHLT is committed to protecting the elk herds that define this valley.



Hard to see the conservation easements on the map? That's because they're so heavily utilized by the elk! The conservation properties shown in red, many of which are held by the Jackson Hole Land Trust, protect essential transitional and seasonal habitats for elk in the valley.

Map from *Wild Migrations: Atlas of Wyoming's Ungulates* (in press) OSU Press, © 2018 University of Wyoming and University of Oregon.





Photo: Shiyon Mitche



**Red Rock Ranch**  
469 Acres  
Protected Since 2001  
Photo: David Stubbs

# PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

## JH WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

When picturing our home in Northwest Wyoming, most of us likely do not pay much mind to the hundreds of miles of fences that stretch across the landscape, perhaps thinking of them as thin lines that frame the epic vistas of the West. Some of these fences are no longer needed or could be modified to be more passable to wildlife while still functioning for livestock. However, the work involved in removing and modifying fences is labor-intensive and time-consuming. Not every landowner is able to take on the challenge, and certainly not without outside resources. That is where a partnership between the Jackson Hole Land Trust (JHLT) and Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation (JHWF) comes in.

Conservation easements held by the JHLT often contain fences that have become obsolete or can be retrofitted to wildlife-friendly specifications. The JHLT plays a key role in introducing conservation-minded landowners to the JHWF's Wildlife-Friendlier Fencing Program. For more than 25 years, this program has worked to remove or retrofit fences with the goal of reducing barriers to wildlife movement and migration.

Last summer, more than 20 volunteers joined the staff of the JHWF to remove over a half-mile of obsolete barbed wire fence from the boundary of Forest Service and private land at the Red Rock Ranch, a 469-acre JHLT conservation easement protected since 2001. The ranch and surrounding public lands comprise important habitat for mule deer, elk, and moose throughout the year. Elk and moose especially rely on this area in the winter, resulting in a "crucial winter range" designation, meaning these animals rely on unhindered access to these habitats in the snowy winter months.

Red Rock Ranch is a working cattle operation, and so the landowners opted to convert a quarter-mile stretch of existing barbed wire fence to wildlife-friendly. The JHWF removed the low bottom wire and the high top wire to make it easier for pronghorn to slip beneath the fence and elk to jump over more safely. This fence removal and retrofit project will go a long way toward ensuring wildlife have the open space they need to thrive.

Beyond the danger they pose to wildlife, fences not designed to wildlife-friendly specs also tend to see more damage from wildlife struggling to pass over and under. Making fences safer for wildlife reduces the amount of maintenance and repairs required over time, reducing costs and labor for landowners, especially ranchers needing to contain livestock. With fence material prices increasing more and more every year, this is essential for ranching operations. Since many of JHWF's fencing projects are completed by a core group of local volunteers and materials are largely funded by the Teton Conservation District, fence improvement or removal projects often come with little to no cost to the landowner.

Fences are a part of life for many in Wyoming. Therefore, making them as wildlife-friendly as possible enhances habitat connectivity and migrations, leading to stronger wildlife populations for all of us to appreciate. The Jackson Hole Land Trust is grateful for the work of the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation and its many devoted volunteers in improving habitat for Wyoming's most iconic species.



### What is wildlife-friendly fencing?

To keep livestock in and wildlife out of trouble:

- Trade the barbs for smooth wire on top and bottom (a rail on top is even better for moose, especially in riparian areas)
- Keep the bottom wire 18 inches away from the ground—pronghorn and young deer will crawl under
- A top wire no higher than 42 inches will help deer, elk, and moose make the leap
- Should a hoof catch, 12 inches between the top wires will lower chances of tangling

Could your fencing be the next wildlife-friendly project? Reach out to Director of Stewardship Derek Ellis: [derekellis@jhlandtrust.org](mailto:derekellis@jhlandtrust.org) or (307) 733-4707.



# COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAMMING: LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

In partnership with the Teton County Library Friends, there is now a Little Free Library at the Greenspace on the Block! This new resource will help spread the love of reading throughout the community and put books in the hands of all, including those that do not have ways of getting books otherwise—whether for financial or accessibility reasons. Jackson Hole Land Trust staff sat down with Teton County Library Friends Board President, Lori Clark-Erickson, to learn more about the new Little Free Library at the Greenspace on the Block.

**Jackson Hole Land Trust:** Will you tell us a little about your involvement with Little Free Library?

**Lori Clark-Erickson:** Little Free Library is a nationwide program developed to offer free books to passersby in neighborhoods. Maria Hayashida, former volunteer coordinator for Teton County Library Friends, started Jackson's program in Jackson in 2017 and it now has 10 Little Free Libraries throughout the valley. We will continue to place Little Free Libraries in special spots like the Greenspace on the Block where people are going to come and enjoy them.

**JHLT:** Can you tell us a little bit about the design process and artists and the partnership that you did with the school?

**LCE:** In collaboration with a local craftsperson, Becky Hawkins, high school student and artist, Wyatt Mommsen, worked to design and paint the body of the Little Free Library. Wyatt spent hours working on his creation making sure it was perfect. I think that is what makes this specific Little Free Library so special.

**JHLT:** How do you think the Little Free Library will help build community?

**LCE:** You can share books that mean something special to you or find a book that you want to give to a friend, classmate, or neighbor. It's a great way to create a sense of community through sharing. These are happy places, and the Little Free Libraries help spread that happiness.

**JHLT:** What about the Greenspace on the Block makes this an ideal location for a Little Free Library?

**LCE:** The Greenspace on the Block is a perfect location for a Little Free Library! Since it is so close to not only downtown but also to Jackson Hole Elementary, it's the perfect opportunity for community members, children, and visitors to stop by the Little Free Library as they walk home from school, meet up with a friend, or perhaps just getting off the bus. We were so thrilled as a community to be able to save the Greenspace on the Block and have this park for posterity; it's just an awesome public spot. I think it's great to have these smaller parks because not all visitors or

community members get to our parks.

**JHLT:** Why were you excited to partner with the Jackson Hole Land Trust?

**LCE:** We are so excited as a county entity to partner with other organizations that have similar community-driven missions. It's really powerful because, with partnerships, we can work to meet the needs of the community. I'm excited that we can all work together.

Thank you to Lori for this interview (edited for length and clarity), and to Teton County Library Friends Board Member Karin King, who played a vital part in the installation process.

Visit the Greenspace on the Block today and grab a book at the Little Free Library! Interested in partnering with the JHLT to further community conservation? Please contact Community Conservation Programs Manager Mika Burdette at [mika@jhlandtrust.org](mailto:mika@jhlandtrust.org) or (307) 733-4707.

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Photo: Zach Andres



Photo: Zach Andres



# DONOR PROFILE:

## SHIVYON MITCHELL

Meet WYLD member Shivyon Mitchell! You might also catch this local photographer behind the lens at a JHLT event or capturing the light on a conservation easement. You can check out her work at [outwestjh.com](http://outwestjh.com) and join her in becoming a WYLD member at [jhlandtrust.org/WYLD](http://jhlandtrust.org/WYLD).

**Jackson Hole Land Trust:** What initially sparked your interest in the WYLD program and prompted you to get involved?

**Shivyon Mitchell:** After photographing a couple of WYLD events, I was able to see their community outreach. I saw so much value in it and I wanted to be a part of this change! What prompted me to finally get involved was seeing all the hard work put into R Park and seeing my community, my friends, enjoy it.

**JHLT:** What was your favorite JHLT event this year?

**SM:** My favorite JHLT event this year had to be the WYLD Dinner that was hosted at Rocking H Ranch last fall. Seeing Max talk about the success of the program and being one of the many he was attributing the success to was rewarding.

**JHLT:** What JHLT event have you enjoyed most?

**SM:** I love attending the Annual Community Picnic! It is always a joy to catch up with friends and meet new ones at this event, where the setting is absolutely breathtaking and we get to celebrate these spaces we've saved.

**JHLT:** Why do you support JHLT's WYLD membership and why do you encourage others to do so as well?

**SM:** I support the JHLT through my WYLD membership because Teton County, Wyoming is my home. I had been looking for an organization to donate my time and money to and since becoming a member last March, I see where that time and money are going. I encourage my friends to become members because the open spaces are why we live here—this membership gives everyone in our community access to open spaces!

**JHLT:** What do you love most about living, working, and playing in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem?

**SM:** What I love most about living, working, and playing here in the Greater Yellowstone

Ecosystem is that it's given me the life I've dreamt of living. I've never had this kind of work-life balance anywhere else, where I appreciate my surroundings every single day.

**JHLT:** Where have you seen the WYLD membership make a difference?

**SM:** I first saw the WYLD membership make a difference after JH Public Art's "Mama Mimi" installment at R Park was finished. I loved that this project reminded us that we can have more beautiful community spaces like this one, if we join together and protect our environment.

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Photo: Lara Azria-Reucassel of JW Bennett



Photo: Shivyon Mitchell



## EXPLORE

[jhlandtrust.org](http://jhlandtrust.org)

## CALL

(307) 733-4707

## MAIL

PO Box 2897  
Jackson, WY 83001

## VISIT

Jackson Office  
690 S Hwy 89 Ste 101  
Jackson, WY 83001

Pinedale Office  
7 W Pine St  
Pinedale, WY 82941

R Park Office  
4270 River Spring Dr  
Jackson, WY 83002



PO Box 2897  
Jackson, WY 83001

# SAVE THE DATE: 2023 EVENTS

## R PARK SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

Friday, June 23

## CONCERT AT THE GREENSPACE ON THE BLOCK

Tuesday, July 25

## ANNUAL COMMUNITY PICNIC

Sunday, August 13

## GRVP COMMUNITY PICNIC

Sunday, September 10

## WYLD DINNER

Friday, September 29

**JH Public Art GLOW Exhibit  
Greenspace on the Block**

2 Acres  
Protected Since 2019  
*Photo: Sam Pope*