Arnie Brokling

GREEN RIVER VALLEY
JACKSON HOLE LAND TRUST

| 2026 Green River Valley Program Newsletter

Open Lands

Letter From the Regional Director

Rooted in Experiences

To me, nothing is more exciting than seeing a new part of Wyoming for the first time. This July, my German shorthaired pointer and I made an unplanned journey up the Big Sandy River to join a good friend at the beautiful Temple Lake in the Wind River Mountains.

After hearing of this spot for years and seeing so many stunning images, I finally took the opportunity to see the jagged, high-altitude towers of Temple and East Temple peaks, and they did not disappoint. I always appreciate the chance to go somewhere I've never been before and experience a beautiful, unique piece of Wyoming.

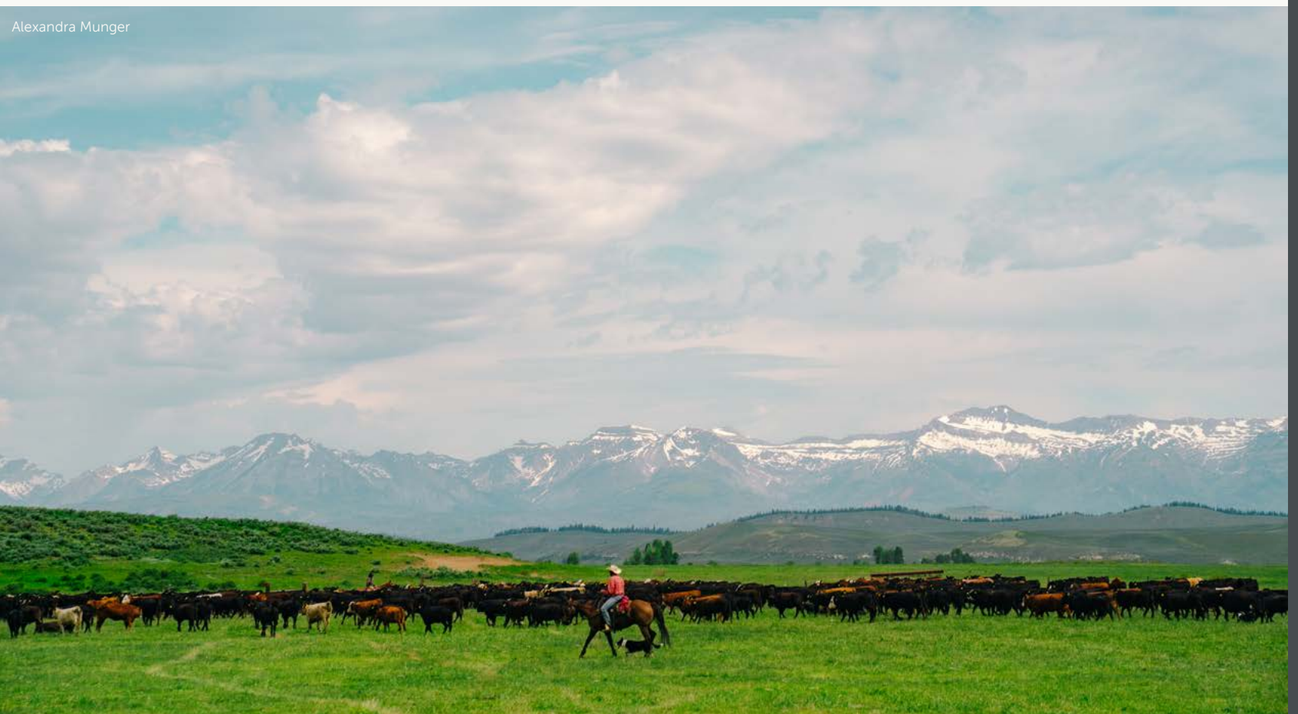
This summer, I'm so proud to say that the Green River Valley Program (GRVP) has made strides in offering similar awe-inspiring experiences to our supporters that help us keep Northwest Wyoming wild, open, and connected.

We hosted two plant walks in partnership with our local Native Plant Society and a special float down the Green River along the Carney easement network in Kendall Valley, giving our conservation supporters opportunities to get up close and personal with private lands that are forever protected through conservation easements. I'm grateful to our landowner partners for their hospitality and for stewarding their protected lands with such care.

It reminded me that, while sometimes we may prefer the solitude Wyoming offers, experiencing this unique landscape together is what makes us a community. The GRVP would be nothing without community support, so I thank you, our donors, landowners, partners, and GRVP team for continuing to come together and keeping Wyoming western and wild.

With Gratitude,

Kerry Schultz
Green River Valley Program Director



Alexandra Munger

Active Projects Update

By the Numbers

6,462
Acres of Easements in Progress

3,933
Acres of Greater Sage Grouse Core Area

Rob Tolley

2,939
Acres of Crucial Big Game Ranges

Rob Tolley

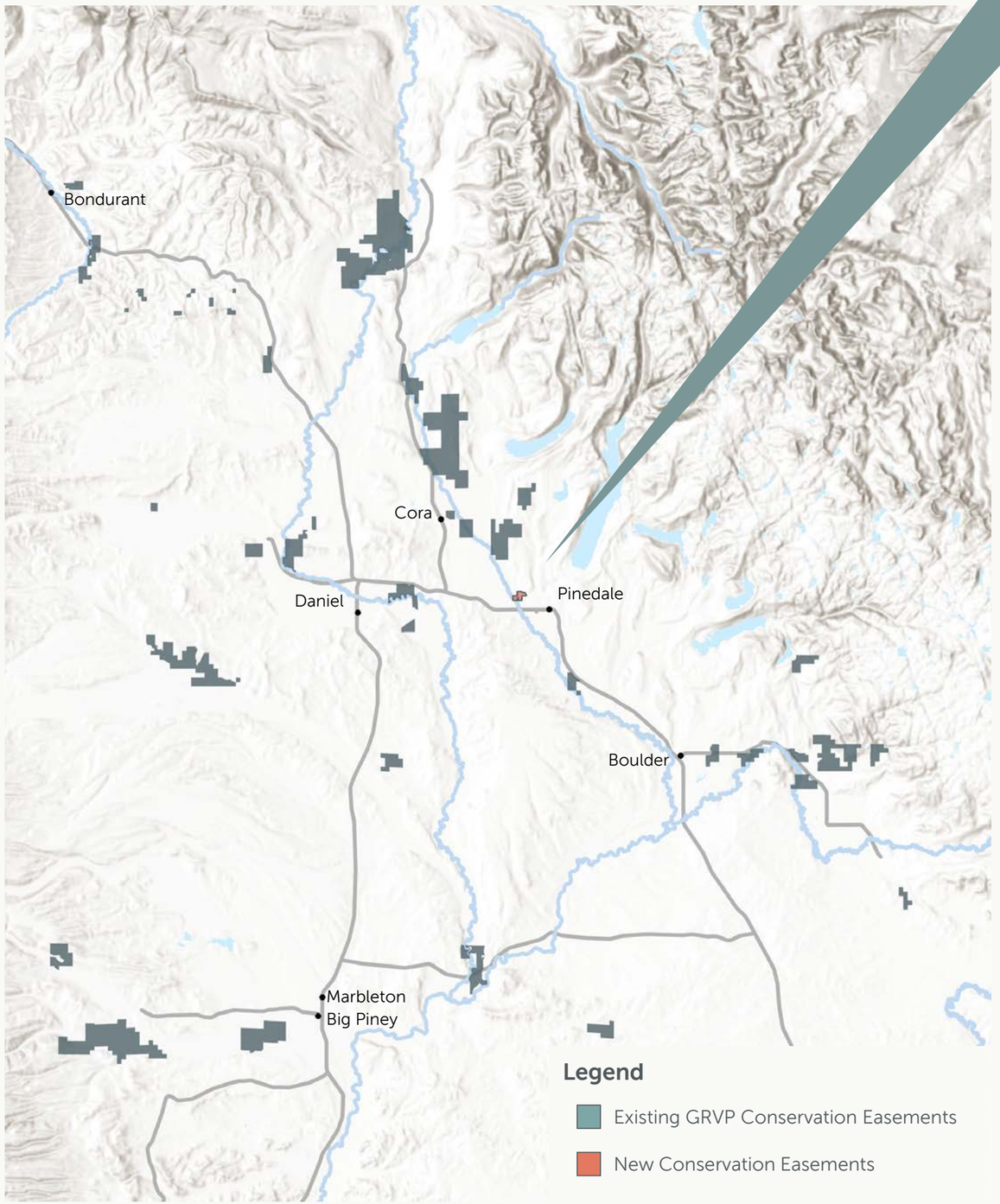
12.5
Miles of Crucial Stream Corridors

8
Family-Owned Ranches

545
Acres of Mule Deer Migration Corridor

Alexandra Munger

145 Acres Protected



Cantlin Place Conservation Easement

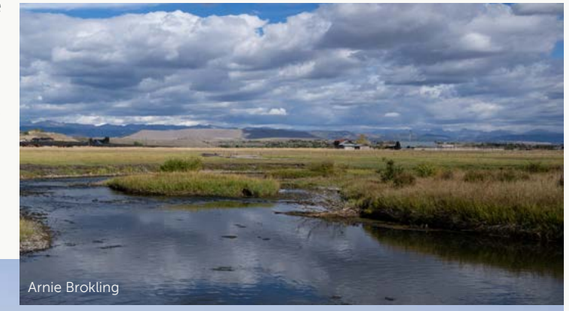
145 Acres | Protected by the Green River Valley Program of the JHLT since May 2026

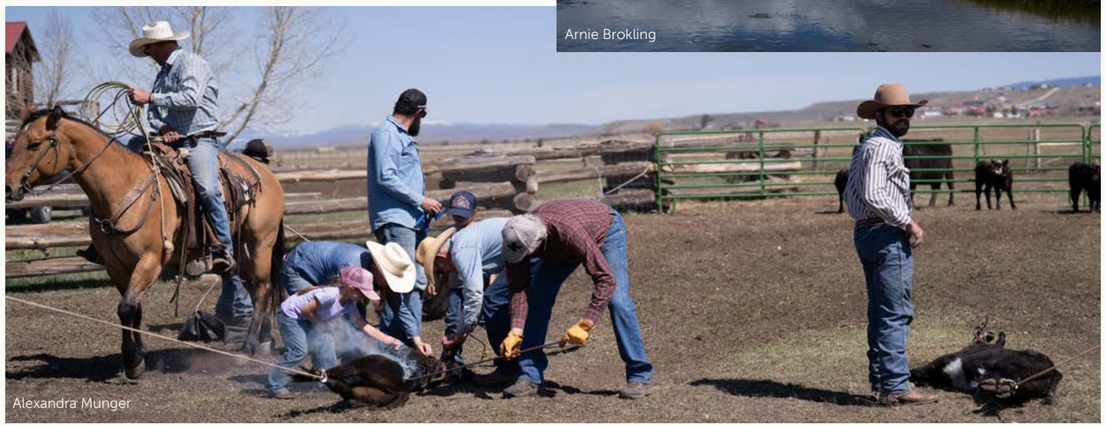
The Cantlin Place Conservation Easement protects a 120-year-old family livestock operation, agricultural open space, and vital wildlife habitat along the New Fork River, while expanding a network of conserved lands around Pinedale and the Wind River front.

Located entirely within the designated Sublette Pronghorn Migration Corridor just west of town, the 145-acre property features hay meadows, irrigated pastures, riparian vegetation, and nearly a third of a mile of the New Fork River, with the Wind River Range rising above. These habitats provide seasonal range for moose, mule deer, and pronghorn, while offering resting and feeding grounds for migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway — a network that depends on working ranches like Cantlin Place.

Landowner Talli Manning pointed to the scale of the challenge facing agricultural land across the country:

"According to statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture, the U.S. loses roughly four million acres of agricultural land each year to development and fragmentation," she said. "Our open spaces, wildlife corridors, and agricultural lands are precious resources that are increasingly endangered. It's imperative that they are preserved."


Arnie Brokling


Alexandra Munger

"Ranches like this one are part of what makes this town scenic, wild, and special," said GRVP Director Kerry Schultz.

Cantlin Place safeguards a ranching legacy and keeps working agricultural lands in the hands of the Manning family, who have managed the ranch across three generations. That legacy is most visible on branding day, when neighbors and friends turn out to gather cattle, mark calves with the family brand, and vaccinate them before they head to summer pasture. The kids work alongside the old-timers, so that the next generation may carry on the tradition.

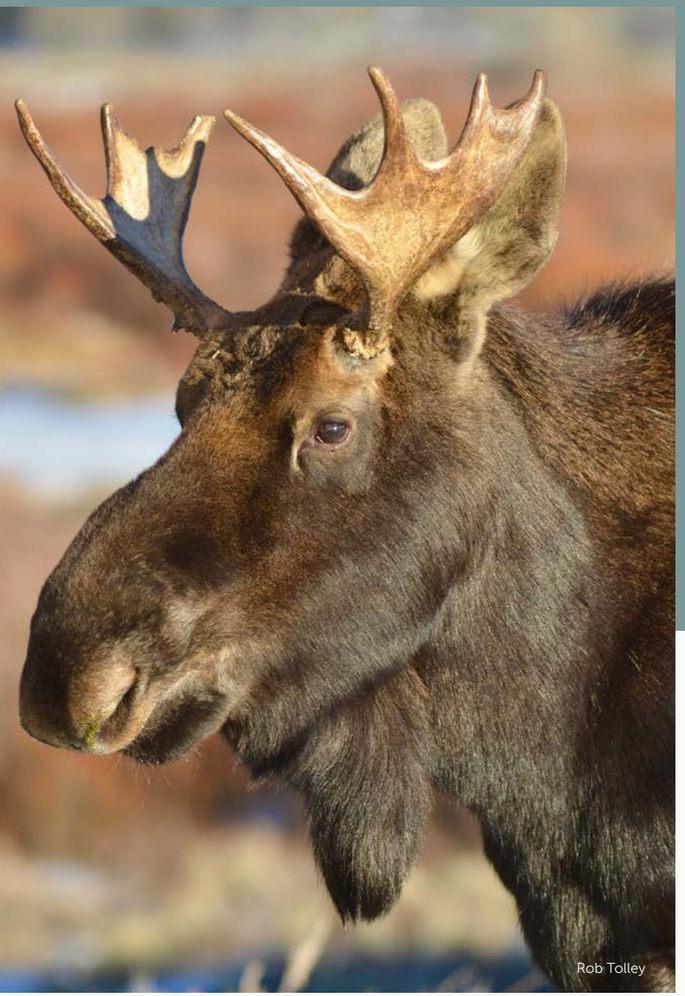
By easing long-term financial pressure on the property, the easement allows the family to reinvest in the operation and eventually pass it on intact, contributing to the broader Sublette County agricultural economy for years to come.

As her daughter Tesa, who grew up on the ranch, shared, "There may be quick money in selling to a developer, but a well-managed ranch can endure forever, supporting a family and coexisting with wildlife. Once a place like this is subdivided, it's gone forever. The wildlife lose their home, migration patterns are altered, and the next generation loses the chance to grow up the way I did."

The Green River Valley Program is proud to help keep the legacy of these landscapes alive by facilitating conservation easements, a powerful tool that enables landowners to protect what they love well beyond their time on the land.

Living with Fire

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) is a fire-prone ecosystem, meaning that fire plays a critical, disturbance role in its landscape-level processes. Disturbance is an essential part of shaping and evolving the structure of an ecosystem and its organisms. So in the case of the GYE, small and moderate fires create a mosaic of burn scars. In their wake, early-successional species flourish, creating important nutrition for ungulates and habitat for native flora and fauna. These burn scars create natural fuel breaks, limiting the size of future fires.



Rob Tolley

The State of Wyoming has an aggressive policy on fire. When a fire is detected, the top priority is to put it out as fast as possible. While well intended, after a century of fire suppression, the current landscape is no longer a tapestry of burns, but unbroken fuel. As Nate Wilson, District 4 Forester of the Wyoming State Forestry Division, points out, the confier forests of our region are likely denser and older on average than they were prior to fire suppression. These older age class forests are more vulnerable to insects and disease which increases fuel loading even further.

Correcting a century of misguided fire management techniques and human intervention does not happen quickly. Development within the wildland-urban interface (WUI) has put homes, habitats, and businesses in contact with a fuel source designed to burn.

In 2018, an abandoned campfire ignited the most destructive wildfire in Sublette County's recent history. The Roosevelt Fire burned more than 61,000 acres of conifer forest, sagebrush rangeland, and lush grassland. It forced evacuations, tore through a subdivision, and destroyed fifty-five homes. Wilson encourages landowners to embrace the tenets of a fire-adaptive community, one that accepts that not every fire will be put out, and to protect structures where you can to improve resilience.

Many of the Green River Valley Program's conservation easements lie within the WUI. Easement stewardship on these properties already involves monitoring forest health, wildlife habitat, and wildfire risk, which is to say that conservation and wildfire mitigation often advance on the same ground, reducing future losses to both environmental and human values.

Development along the wildland-urban interface has put homes, habitats, and livelihoods in contact with a fuel source designed to burn.

Wildfire mitigation begins with understanding how fire actually moves. Steve Markason of Teton Wildfire Mitigation Team, a retired fire management officer with the Bridger-Teton National Forest, describes the four pathways: vegetation-to-vegetation, vegetation-to-structure, structure-to-structure, and ember-to-structure. Roughly ninety percent of home losses result from embers, not a wall of flame arriving through the trees, but burning debris landing on a roof, collecting in a gutter, lodging in a vent. That statistic sets the order of operations.

Every property has its own conditions, from slope angle to fuel type, but the strategy holds across them all: Work from the top of the house outward, then from the forest inward.

The mitigation zones are the same principle, expressed in feet. Markason explains that, starting with the Immediate Zone, the home ignition zone encompasses the house itself and the first five feet around it (aka, non-combustible zone). Post-fire research shows this is the most critical zone to fortify, and the work here is home hardening: the materials and structural details of the building, from roof and vents to siding and decking. The Intermediate Zone runs from five to thirty feet, where mitigation becomes defensible space: appropriately spaced trees, no limbs below six feet, low-lying vegetation and downed trees kept to a minimum. The Extended Zone reaches from thirty feet to somewhere between one hundred and two hundred feet, depending on topography, and defensible space here follows a broader guiding principle: Look through the trees to see the forest.

Wildfire mitigation can be daunting, but there are experts here to help. In Sublette County, Josie Valette, wildland-urban interface mitigation coordinator for Sublette County Unified Fire provides free consultations. She tries to give landowners a top-three project plan to start with, and she reminds people that the whole project does not have to be finished to still make a difference.

Find more resources in the wildfire mitigation section of the GRVP Resource Hub.

Jansen Gunderson

Conservation Up Close

On paper, the benefits of a conservation easement may seem abstract, but underfoot, they are obvious: a family ranch still whole, an ancient migration corridor unbroken across a mosaic of public and private land, biodiversity flourishing in an intact habitat. The Green River Valley Program's (GRVP) team observes this firsthand, working directly with private landowners to conserve the land's legacy for the people and wildlife who inherit it. While all conservation easements protect land for public benefit, outsiders rarely get the opportunity to walk them.

With over 70 conservation easements to date, each protected property offers a special mix of agricultural heritage, wildlife habitat, and scenic vistas. This summer, GRVP staff and advisory council members partnered with conservation easement landowners to invite community members out onto the land. In lieu of an Annual Community Picnic in 2026, the GRVP set out to give supporters and community members three unique opportunities to connect with conserved lands and experience new pieces of the Green River Valley.

Just northwest of Boulder, Wyoming, lies Mountain Springs Ranch. Here we explored the Hall Basin Unit Conservation Easement with members of the Sublette County Native Plant Society. Conserved in 2009, this working ranch protects nearly 280 acres, from sagebrush uplands to lodgepole pine forest and riparian ecosystem that include crucial range for mule deer, moose, and elk. An old two-track led the group along Spring Creek and into a stand of aspen mixed with willow, snowberry, juniper, wild rose, and chokecherry among tall native grasses and stunning wildflowers: a mix of scarlet gilia, geranium, and many species of aster and phlox.

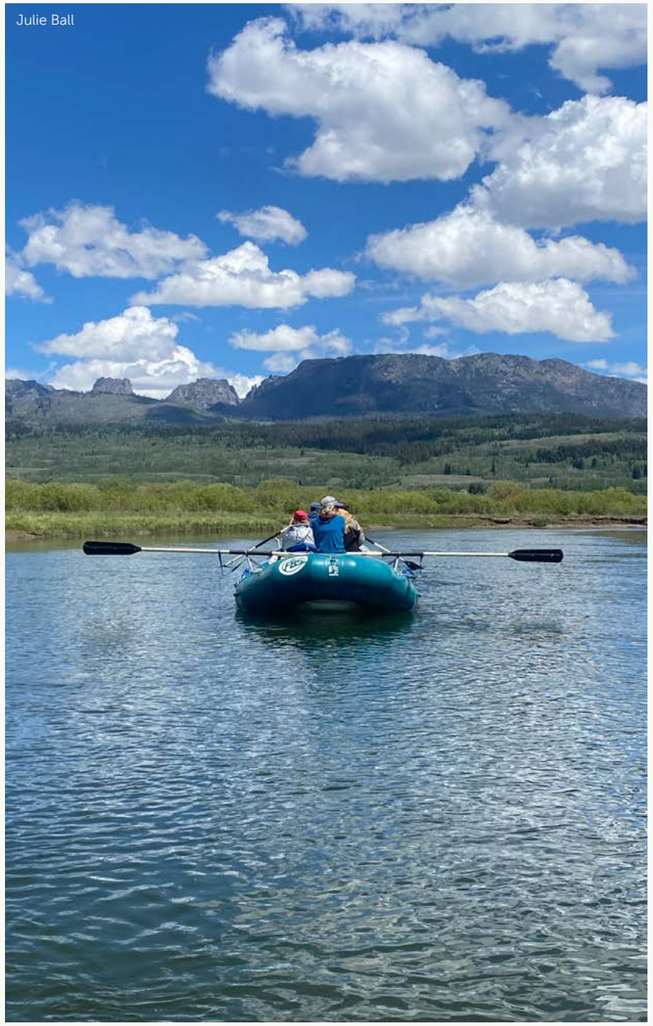
Along the route, the group stopped beneath the canopy to consider the role of quaking aspen — an iconic species of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The aspen thinned about a quarter mile in and opened into a meadow. The trapper Charlie Hall is buried there, killed in 1894 in a dispute with a neighbor. His grave is among the cultural legacies this easement preserves.

Within a few weeks, we experienced yet another fantastic outing. At the end of June, generous partners from Trout Unlimited and Wyoming Game and Fish joined us for a spectacular eight-mile float down the Green River through the five Carney conservation easements 4,200 acres in size. This leg of the Green is not often floated, as the distance between public boat access points is quite long. We peacefully meandered the bends of the Green through Kendall Valley, where water gives life and an ancient pronghorn migration route still stands thanks to generations of landowners who chose the path of conservation. We pulled out at Twin Eagle Ranch, where we learned about the day-to-day life of the cattle operation protected since 1995, and the ongoing efforts to steward the land for wildlife and livestock alike. Not everyone fished, but several did and landed native mountain whitefish that we could see hugging the river bottom under our boats. Floating the river deep in the valley dwarfed by the peaks of the Winds and Gros Ventre, we felt small and grateful for the scale of the ecosystem we have worked for so long to protect.

Our outings wrapped up with a plant walk with the Native Plant Society at the Sparrowe and Signal Hill easements located on the Hoback Rim, the divide between the Green and Snake River Basins that host the Sublette Mule Deer Migration Corridor. Together, they conserve approximately 120 acres of wildflower meadows, sagebrush, aspen, and conifer forest, bounded by Bureau of Land Management with nearby Forest Service land and easements. The 2018 Roosevelt Fire burned through both properties, a scorcher that burned over 61,000 acres of private and public lands. Sparrowe and Signal Hill now present the severity of the burn alongside ecological recovery. What once were dense, tall conifer forests now stretch across the hills as reddish-brown standing snags. The fire consumed the canopy that once blocked sightlines, allowing views across distances impossible in an intact forest. Now the land is covered in short, dense aspen stands and bright bunches of fireweed and hollyhock, with young sprouts of lodgepole pine finally emerging after getting the fiery conditions they need to reproduce.

We were joined by the Chilcote and Sparrowe families, who walked the group through the history of conservation in the Wyoming Range, the decisions, and the decades that produced the protected landscape now visible from the rim. This visit was especially rewarding, as the Sparrowe conservation easement, protected in 1999, was the first ever established in Sublette County.

Julie Ball



Exploring these places this summer was a gift, but really it was just confirmation of what the land does every day. An intact migration corridor, a clean river, a ranch still whole and working: that is collectively beneficial, kept up by the families who steward the land.

Thank you to the landowners who opened their gates this summer, and to the partners who came along. If you'd like to walk with us next year, or help make this work possible, reach out to the GRVP today.

Julie Ball

While all conservation easements protect land for public benefit, outsiders rarely get the opporunity to walk them.

GRVP Advisory Council

Leading Locally

The GRVP is thrilled to welcome two new members to the advisory council, Leah Zupan and Russell Burton.

Leah grew up on a dairy farm in Vermont, raised among Jersey cattle, horses, pigs, chickens and a garden before “regenerative agriculture” was a common term. Her background with livestock and horses eventually brought her out West, first to Colorado, then to Montana State University, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in animal science. While managing the Double J, Leah furthered her education in grass and range management, and she is now completing a master’s in rangeland ecology and land resource science. Her experience also includes private consulting and high school level teaching. She and her husband are raising two boys on a ranch in Sublette County, where she applies her knowledge and love of agriculture daily.

Leah Zupan

Russell is a Saratoga native with nearly a decade of consulting experience across Wyoming and the Great Basin. In 2026, he joined KC Harvey Environmental, LLC as senior project manager and senior scientist, leading range and wildlife projects on public and private lands, working with ranchers and land managers, drawing on past work with the USFS, BLM, and State of Wyoming. His approach centers on balancing local customs, culture, and knowledge with sound science. Russell holds degrees in rangeland ecology and watershed management from the University of Wyoming and is the past president of the Society for Range Management’s Wyoming section. He and his wife are raising their daughter in Daniel, where they run a direct-to-consumer farm.

Russell Burton

Deborah Dawson

Jon Dawson

Troy Fieseler

Faith Hamlin

Hadley Manning

Jim Roscoe

Alexandra Munger

Landowner Resource Hub

Tools & Support

Looking for a way to support the costs of caring for your land?

The Green River Valley Program (GRVP) maintains a list of grants, cost-share resources, and technical assistance contacts available in Sublette County to help connect landowners with resources that can support wildlife habitat protection, water infrastructure improvements, and other conservation and land management practices.

The Green River Valley Resource Hub was created to connected landowners with the tools, knowledge, and support needed to care for the land. The Hub brings everything together in one place.

Together, we can protect the Green River Valley’s open spaces, wildlife, and cultural heritage for generations to come.

Explore resources at jhlandtrust.org/hub or contact our stewardship staff.

Alexandra Munger

Explore
jhlandtrust.org/GRVP

Call
(307) 367-7007

Mail
PO Box 1580
Pinedale, WY 82941

Visit
7 W Pine St
Pinedale, WY 82941

GREEN RIVER VALLEY
JACKSON HOLE LAND TRUST

PO Box 1580
Pinedale, WY 82941

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