### **SUMMER** 2022 **TETON STEWARDS NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION**



















# CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

In 1996, former Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Jack Neckels was sitting around a table with the park's executive team. He recalls a feeling of frustration as he brought up a recurring challenge that faced the group—the visitor center roof was leaking again, and he lamented about the outdated building's many shortfalls.

"Why don't we build a new visitor center?" the chief of interpretation at the time, Bill Swift, said. Knowing that Grand Teton did not have the resources to construct a visitor center worthy of this park, the comment gave Neckels an idea.

He reached out to local businessman and philanthropist Jerry Halpin and pitched the idea of creating a foundation to raise private dollars in support of a modern visitor center for Grand Teton National Park. Halpin was intrigued and offered to host a dinner with community leaders and park enthusiasts at Lost Creek Ranch, the guest ranch just outside the park boundary that he owned, to discuss the opportunity.

At the end of the evening, Neckels was shaking hands and thanking people as they left. He recalls saying goodbye to one couple and, as they walked away, they subtly handed him a \$100 bill. Not only was this the first gift to Grand Teton National Park Foundation, it also gave Neckels the confidence that the group was behind him and the idea of using philanthropic dollars to help build a visitor center might actually work.

Fast forward to 2004 when the young organization and its new executive director, Leslie Mattson, realized the largest challenge would be navigating the public-private partnership with Grand Teton National Park. Although a number of friends groups were in existence across the country, building a multimillion dollar visitor center was one of the most significant undertakings at the time. The Foundation worked with the National Park Service and Congress to secure \$8 million in federal funds, reviewed more than fifty proposals from architects and exhibit designers, and debated building sites. The group ultimately raised over \$16 million in private support.

Nearly ten years after that first meeting at Lost Creek Ranch, the 22,000 square foot Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center opened in summer 2007. Sweeping mountain views, engaging interpretive exhibits, interactive displays, and a modern auditorium now welcome and orient park visitors. The completion of this facility not only laid the groundwork for the partnership that exists between the organization and Grand Teton today, it created what has become a network of supporters who are eager to do more for their favorite national park.

"There are many proud moments in my history with the Foundation," Rob Wallace, a founding board member, said. "But if I had to pick one, it would be the completion of the visitor center. It presented many challenges because Congress, the park service, and friends groups were unaccustomed to working together on a project of this size. Once successfully completed, Grand Teton and the Foundation had a roadmap for more public-private projects, and supporters in other parks could see firsthand the art of the possible."

Since the visitor center's opening, the Foundation and its work in partnership with the park has flourished. From annual initiatives supporting youth engagement, wildlife research, and historic preservation, to the multiyear renewal of trails and visitor services at Jenny Lake or the protection of 640 acres of critical habitat on Antelope Flats, this partnership has had a tremendous and long-lasting impact on Grand Teton.

The success of the Foundation over the last twenty-five years would not be possible without the dedicated supporters who care so deeply for this incredible national park and ecosystem. From that first couple who gave \$100 to the 6,657 donors who have contributed more than \$103 million since then—thank you for your support. As we look to the future, we are confident that together we can continue to enable tremendous outcomes to ensure the park we love today inspires visitors for decades to come.

Photos: Aceshot/Mormon Row Barn, Diana Stratton/Wolf, Kelly Vandellen/Bear, Ryan Sheets and NPS/Park Images



### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF FOUNDATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

**Supported** the construction of the Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center, a 22,000 square foot facility that orients, educates, and inspires visitors to make discoveries of their own in Grand Teton—the Foundation's flagship project. *(Opened in 2007)* 





**Preserved** irreplaceable historical structures including the Bar BC Dude Ranch, Lucas Fabian Homestead, and more to maintain cultural treasures from Grand Teton's storied past. (Ongoing)

**Conserved** 640-acres of critical wildlife habitat by helping the park purchase an inholding on Antelope Flats that was owned by the state of Wyoming and threatened with potential development. (*Purchased in 2016*)



**Engaged** more than 1,000 young people in Grand Teton through five programs that are creating the next generation of park stewards and leaders. (Ongoing)





**Purchased** the last privately-held inholding on Mormon Row, which was transferred to the park for inclusion in the historic district and is now utilized for seasonal workforce housing. (2018) **Educated** countless park visitors about resource protection and safety through four volunteer programs— Wildlife Brigade, String Lakers, Nordic Ambassadors, and Snake River Ambassadors. (*Ongoing*)



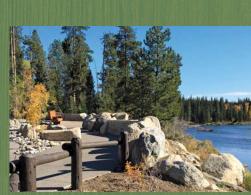
**Funded** impactful conservation and research programs for gray wolves, grizzly bears, black bears, pronghorn, bison, osprey, bighorn sheep, mule deer, cutthroat trout, and more to help conserve Grand Teton's wildlife through informed decision making. (Ongoing)

### 6,657 DONORS HAVE CIFTED MORE THAN \$103 MILLION TO GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION SINCE 1997

to engage youth, conserve natural resources, preserve historic landscapes, and create meaningful visitor experiences. We could not have accomplished all of this without you—thank you!



Initiated a multiyear project to enhance existing visitor access points, address environmental damage, and improve facilities at three heavily-used locations along the Snake River— Pacific Creek Landing, Jackson Lake Dam, and Moose Landing. (Started in 2020, projected completion in 2024)



**Transformed** backcountry trails and frontcountry facilities at Grand Teton's most iconic destination— Jenny Lake. (NPS Centennial gift in 2016)

Photos: Diana Stratton/Bison, Charlie Hamilton-James/Trout, Ryan Sheets and NPS/Park Images

### Message from President LESLIE MATTSON



n 1997, Jack Neckels, Grand Teton National Park's superintendent at the time, approached Jerry Halpin with the idea of forming a nonprofit that would raise funds for a new visitor center. Grand Teton National Park Foundation began under the leadership of Jerry as board chair and the founding board members who agreed to help. This group included Clay and Shay James, Rob and Celia Wallace, Ed and Lee Riddell, Brad and Kate Mead, Nancy and Bob Jaycox, Anne and Ron Walker, John Townsend, and John Faraci.

The board, along with superintendents Jack Neckels, Steve Martin, Mary Gibson Scott, and the late Senator Craig Thomas, who facilitated an \$8.5 million federal match of the private funding, was successful in raising \$16.8 million. On August 11, 2007, the Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center opened to the public. We estimate more than 5 million folks have visited the impressive building designed by Peter Bohlin.

Since that initial project, our organization and Grand Teton National Park have executed many important initiatives. We've recapped them for you in this newsletter, and, for me, this was a gratifying look back on the breadth of work our partnership accomplishes together. It also affirms what I have witnessed numerous times over—there's always a solution. Passionate, committed people can enable incredible outcomes.

Since July 2004, I have had the honor of leading this wonderful organization. The fledgling Foundation would not have evolved into the organization it is today without the entrepreneurial spirit of our park friends and the ongoing support of thousands of people who love Grand Teton. I thank all of you. I also want to recognize Jack Neckels, the late Jerry Halpin, and the founding board members whose vision twenty-five years ago resulted in an organization that has an enormous impact on our beloved park and serves as a national model for public-private partnerships. They set out to build a building but they will long be remembered for shaping significant pieces of the process that is now transforming our national parks.

This year, we are working with our partners to update our organization's long-range plan. There are many modern challenges and opportunities that face Grand Teton and, as we look to the future, we are excited to build on our past achievements to ensure the park we love today continues to thrive.

Thank you! And Happy 25th Birthday Grand Teton National Park Foundation!

Leslie Mattson

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President



## MULTI-YEAR EFFORT RENEWS POPULAR HISTORIC DISTRICT

Increasing visitation and years of exposure to Jackson Hole's harsh weather have taken a toll on many of the historic properties in Grand Teton National Park. The Mormon Row Historic District—the park's most popular and accessible cultural destination—is no exception.

Once a thriving agricultural community and a hub of social life for the valley's northern residents at the turn of the twentieth century—in its heyday, Mormon Row included twenty-six homesteads, a post office, community school, and church—most of the structures are long gone and today only six homestead sites remain.

Still, Mormon Row is widely recognized as one of the best examples of an early 1900s western farming community in the National Park Service and is home to Grand Teton's iconic vernacular barns, which are continually memorialized through photograph. A substantial amount of work is required in order to ensure that the remaining buildings, along with the stories of the people who lived in them, are preserved as part of the historic fabric of the region. Together, these bring life and color to visitors' experiences of this iconic cultural landscape in Grand Teton.

Hal Blake, whose ancestors were among the first to homestead the area back in 1896, recalls his childhood at Mormon Row. "I used to spend my summers as a youth working the hayfields with my grandfather, Clark Moulton. I have fond memories of learning to drive and being taught the value of hard work." Hal knows the landscape in a way few others do. He and his wife, Iola Blake, raised their own family there, and for twenty years ran the Moulton Ranch Cabins property as overnight lodging for park visitors. When they decided to sell their one-acre parcel in 2018, which was the last privately-held inholding at Mormon Row, the Foundation was able to purchase and then transfer the property to the park. Grand Teton now uses the homestead to house members of its seasonal workforce.

The Moulton Ranch Cabins transfer also marked a significant moment—the conservation of the Mormon Row Historic District in its entirety. This milestone provided an opportunity for park managers to take a comprehensive look at the preservation and visitor enhancement goals for the site.

In 2021, Grand Teton National Park and Grand Teton National Park Foundation launched the Mormon Row Initiative. This effort is, for the first time, holistically accomplishing building and landscape preservation needs, protecting sensitive natural resources, and improving the ways visitors learn about and experience the district's remarkable history. The Foundation's \$3 million fundraising goal will leverage federal funds, enabling a \$5 million, multi-year effort to renew Mormon Row.

Across from the Moulton Ranch Cabins is the Roy Chambers homestead. Similar to the goals for the Moulton property, Roy Chambers will be adaptively reused to provide much-needed park housing as part of the effort. This will ensure Grand Teton has the workers it needs to run daily operations while not adding to the demands of Jackson Hole's already limited housing supply.

The Foundation and park are actively creating a vision for the visitor experience at Mormon Row. This includes opportunities to improve amenities and parking, along with accessibility, site circulation, and creating meaningful educational opportunities.

Hal Blake hopes that visitors of today and tomorrow can experience the profound legacy of the landscape. "I want the Mormon Row Historic District buildings to be preserved. While the nature, wildlife, and beauty is fundamental to what national parks are all about, I want the fact that a community of people once lived and thrived among the elements to never get lost or forgotten." **The Pink House**—part of the original John and Bartha Moulton Homestead—is perhaps the most beloved structure on Mormon Row. In June 2021, the Foundation helped the park address an emergency preservation need to replace the building's foundation and repair its damaged stucco.



The Pink House's stucco was severely cracked due to the building's failing foundation and decades of exposure to the elements.



The Pink House sits on its new foundation, which will eliminate further damage to the building's structural integrity and stucco siding.



NPS historic preservation crews carefully reinstall refurbished stucco to the side of the Pink House.

This year, the park's cultural resources team will focus efforts on replacing the roof, restoring the porch, and reinstalling the historic brick chimney. The stabilization of this iconic structure will ensure its ability to withstand the elements for decades to come, and represents the first building that will be fully preserved through the Mormon Row Initiative. Message from Grand Teton National Park Superintendent CHIP JENKINS

### WE WOULDN'T BE HERE WITHOUT YOU!

early 100 years ago, members of this community came together with the National Park Service to conceive the idea of a national park in the Tetons. Through their partnership efforts, the first iteration of Grand Teton National Park was created in 1929.

Grand Teton's subsequent history, and progress, has been marked by the work of extraordinary partners. Notable names like the Rockefellers but also thousands of others. Families, organizations, and the State of Wyoming have contributed their time, resources, and even land toward furthering our shared conservation commitment by continuing to work to make Grand Teton what it is today.

Grand Teton National Park Foundation has played an incredible role in ensuring this partnership park continues to thrive and improve. During its twenty-five-year history, the Foundation has provided over \$84 million in direct financial support and invaluable non-monetary support to the park.

The impact of that support has been dramatic and essential to making Grand Teton what it is today. It is hard to imagine the park without the Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center, the 640 acres of former state land at Antelope Flats, and the revitalized Jenny Lake area. None of that would have been possible without Grand Teton National Park Foundation. Other philanthropic support from the Foundation is less obvious but equally fundamental to our mission. The Foundation has provided support to our efforts to restore wolves to this landscape and is helping us conduct research to better understand some of the largest wildlife migrations in North America that commence in or pass through Grand Teton. The park's nationally recognized youth programs funded by the Foundation are helping us create the next generation of Grand Teton stewards.

This spring, the park and the Foundation started working together to develop a strategic plan for the next five years. What is emerging from this work are the highest priority needs for the park to increase and improve our efforts to provide world-class visitor experiences while ensuring the wildlife, scenery, and resources that bring visitors here are protected.

All of us who enjoy what Grand Teton is today owe our gratitude to this impactful partnership. There remains much more to be done as we address changing visitation, ensure long-term conservation of wildlife, and welcome new generations of parkstewards. As we look forward to the next twenty-five years, we do so embracing the legacy left to us and, through the power of partnerships harnessed to a strong strategic vision, with a genuine feeling of excitement.

Onward!

## FAREWELL TO VICKIE MATES

Grand Teton National Park's longtime chief of interpretation and partnerships, Vickie Mates, retired from the park service at the end of April. Vickie brought a tremendous amount of experience and enthusiasm to her role in Grand Teton and has been essential to the success of all the Foundation's work with the park.

Together we've renewed trails and visitor services at Jenny Lake through a \$20 million public-private partnership effort; purchased a \$46 million, 640-acre parcel of critical wildlife habitat in the heart of Grand Teton that was threatened with potential development; engaged over 1,000 youth in outdoor education and career de-



velopment; preserved significant historic properties to share the history of this

place with visitors; restored many miles of trail to ensure access to the park's backcountry; initiated vital research and monitoring to protect wildlife and natural resources; and much more. The passion and dedication that Vickie brought to all of our partnership work was a tremendous asset and elevated the success of everything we do.

Vickie, we wish you all the best in this next chapter and are grateful for your many years of collaboration and friendship. Thank you!

Photo: Hannah Hardaway

# JENNY LAKE APP



AT&T

Download the Jenny Lake Explorer app before you visit Grand Teton National Park this summer!

Once on site, find augmented reality wildlife on the Discovery Trail, explore the Wild Guide, learn the name of each mountain with the Peak Finder, grab your virtual gear to climb the Grand Teton, and much more. For those potential Junior Rangers, track your progress and earn your badge!

Discover a unique way to learn more about this favorite destination, download the Jenny Lake Explorer app today:







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