



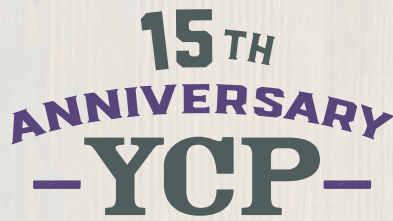
SUMMER  
2021

# TETON STEWARDS

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION







# IN THEIR OWN WORDS: YOUTH CONSERVATION PROGRAM ALUMS REFLECT ON FIFTEEN YEARS OF IMPACT

## Transformative. Challenging. Inspirational. Wilderness. Friendships.

These are some of the words that Youth Conservation Program (YCP) alums have used to describe their experience in the Foundation's flagship youth program, which is executed in partnership with Grand Teton National Park.

YCP was launched in 2006 to steward the next generation of conservation leaders—aligning with the core mission of the National Park Service to foster a land ethic and an appreciation for the outdoors in young people. This powerful and immersive program employs sixteen to nineteen-year-olds on the park's trail crew, accomplishing critical stewardship projects while also cultivating job skills and supporting aspiring leaders as they make career and lifestyle decisions.

Over the years, YCP has grown in both size and impact, regularly employing twenty to twenty-four young people a season during a typical year. **274 youth have participated in the program since its inception.**

As we celebrate a decade and a half of impact—a significant milestone—it's an appropriate time to reflect on the program's influence. Whether they participated in 2005 or 2019, YCP alums we recently spoke with have a lot to say

about how their experience in Grand Teton continues to affect their lives.

Crys Moosman shared that YCP taught her to be a steward of the outdoors. "If I hadn't done YCP, I would never have discovered my love for working outside and advocating for public lands. I will forever support youth conservation programs as a form of encouraging care of the environment." Crys is currently pursuing a degree in biology and environmental studies while working on a park trail crew in Rocky Mountain National Park.

One goal of YCP is to open pathways to employment within the park service and other public land agencies. Kasey Renfro, two-time alum, credits the program for steering his professional trajectory. "I did two seasons of YCP in Grand Teton and then worked four seasons on the park's trail crew. I am currently working for the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska's Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. YCP launched my federal career and I am very thankful to have been a participant."

For Myles Finlay, the program taught him about leadership and practicing a strong work ethic. "I learned to work

hard and see the rewards of my work. I have a deeper appreciation for every trail I walk on today. I also learned a lot about being on a team and what a functioning team looks like. I use these skills every day in my career."

YCP has ripple effects, as the mother of a 2019 participant summed up in a recent note to the Foundation: "The magic of the Tetons continues to permeate within my daughter. You did not just touch twenty-some kids. You are helping to impact a generation. My daughter's passion for national parks, and in particular the Tetons, is ingrained in her soul. It is part of who she is now and who she will become. Whether her career path takes her into medicine, business, or law, I know she will be a strong advocate for our parks and will carry the torch of protection and conservation."

Stories like these demonstrate the lasting impact on the education, employment, and lifestyle choices of young people after spending an immersive summer in Grand Teton. Today and tomorrow, this program is creating the conservation leaders of the future.





**“The magic of the Tetons continues to permeate within my daughter.  
You did not just touch twenty-some kids. You are helping to impact a generation.”**



## **A DAY IN THE LIFE:**

**Accomplishments of the 2019 YCP crew  
during ten weeks in Grand Teton**

- 23 participants
- 4,001 hours worked
- 19,500 feet of elevation gained per participant
- 3,960 feet of new trail dug at Grand View Point
- 876 drains cleared of debris
- 160 feet of timber peeled for Jenny Lake bridge handrails
- 120 miles hiked per participant
- 75 tools sharpened by hand
- 40 feet of log retaining wall built
- 33 hours of injury prevention stretching performed
- 20 hours of medical training completed
- 16 acres of invasive species removed
- 5 black bear sightings and 1 wolf sighting





Message from President  
**LESLIE MATTSON**



**In 2005, while meeting with philanthropists Gale and Shelby Davis, they asked if Grand Teton National Park had a youth trail crew. The Davises had supported a youth conservation program in Acadia National Park and knew that introducing young people to the outdoors at an impressionable age was key to creating the next generation of conservation leaders.**

I followed up with our partners in the park, and former Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott jumped at the opportunity. She also knew firsthand the importance of these programs, as she had started her park service career at a young age as a trail crew member.

Gale and Shelby made the lead gift to launch the first year of Grand Teton's Youth Conservation Program (YCP) in 2006 and have supported the program every year since. YCP has had a tremendous impact on each of the 274 participants who have had the opportunity to work and learn during ten weeks on the trails in Grand Teton.

2021 marks the fifteenth year of YCP (it did not happen last year due to concerns related to Covid-19) and sixteen years of the Foundation

supporting youth outreach efforts in Grand Teton. Today, we partner with the park to execute five of these programs every year, engaging young people in a ladder of opportunities—from week-long outdoor experiences to summer-long internships—planting seeds that will inspire a generation of public land stewards. We are proud of this initiative and are grateful for all of our generous supporters who have made it possible over the last decade and a half. We look forward to continuing to assist the park in implementing these impactful programs for many years to come.

As we begin another busy summer of partnership work in Grand Teton, we are pleased to do so with the park's new superintendent—Chip Jenkins. We look forward to collaborating

with him to achieve our goals while also leveraging the power of this amazing place. I hope you enjoy learning more about Chip and his connection to the outdoors, take a look at our interview with him toward the end of the newsletter.

Thank you for your continued generosity and encouragement. We are supporting nearly thirty projects and programs this year—we could not achieve all we do without the passion and enthusiasm of people like you. Have a wonderful summer season!

Leslie Mattson

  
President



# RENEWING LIFE ON MORMON ROW



Photo: Lynn Yeh

**In 1895, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sent homesteaders into the Jackson Hole valley with the mission of creating a community. With a church and school at its heart and a distinctive arrangement of farms lining one long road, the predominantly self-sufficient outpost was called Grovont, named after the Gros Ventre River.**

The settlement flourished and then slowly faded over the span of nearly a century, but residents left a captivating legacy. Parcel by parcel, the National Park Service was gifted or acquired properties, primarily as life leases expired. Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 due to its rich cultural value, the area's remnants give life to the story of Jackson Hole at the turn of the century. Family histories, passed down through generations, give us a glimpse of the hardships and successes on what is now known as Mormon Row. Today, visitors can stand among the old structures and imagine a landscape that looks much like it did when the Euro-American settlers cultivated this land.

The lack of active use and maintenance over many years—moved along by the weight of winter snows, blistering summer sun, ever-present wind, ground squirrels, bats, and more—has led to

disrepair and then disappearance altogether of many buildings. Without extensive stabilization, preservation treatment, and a comprehensive effort to gather oral accounts before the people with connections to Mormon Row are gone, this landscape's fascinating history will eventually be lost.



We are pleased to share that a multi-year effort is underway to preserve the stories and structures of this captivating place. *Renewing Life on Mormon Row* is a public-private partnership project funded by Grand Teton National Park and Grand Teton National Park Foundation that will revitalize this well-loved destina-

tion, providing visitors with meaningful opportunities to connect with cultural history while immersing themselves in the awe-inspiring Teton landscape. This effort will, for the first time, holistically address preservation needs on the site and improve the ways visitors experience the remarkable legacy of these buildings—bringing the history of this place to life.

Preservation work on Mormon Row began this spring and will continue through 2025. Grand Teton National Park Foundation will raise \$3 million, which will leverage \$1.7 million in federal matching funds from the National Park Service that would not otherwise be available to Grand Teton. Private philanthropy will significantly elevate the outcomes of this project, allowing the story of this iconic destination to inspire visitors for generations to come.

**Visit [gtnpf.org/MormonRow](https://gtnpf.org/MormonRow) or call 307-732-0629 to learn more. Thank you!**





Photo: Krzysztof Wiktor

## Message from Grand Teton National Park Superintendent **CHIP JENKINS**



**E**ach year millions of visitors come to appreciate the vast natural and cultural resources of Grand Teton National Park, and I am honored to serve as park superintendent.

I am equally as honored to collaborate with partners and philanthropic supporters—these are traditions that have guided and shaped the evolution and protection of the park.

As I learn more about Grand Teton and meet many of our partners and stakeholders, it is impressive and heartwarming to see the depth of care and passion that so many people have for this place. This includes the staff, board and resource council members, and donors of Grand Teton National Park Foundation.

The Foundation's reputation and philanthropy leadership role within the National Park Service is well known. While I knew of some the Foundation's work prior to my arrival, I am learning that the partnership and significant support at the park level is truly incredible. The variety of programs help achieve park goals that may otherwise go unmet.

I have been particularly impressed with the suite of youth programs offered through our partnership. Several of these have been in place for over a decade and collectively have impacted thousands of young people.

Through programs such as Youth Conservation Program, Pura Vida, NPS Academy, Mountains to Main Street, and Tribal Youth Corps, participants are introduced to land preservation and conservation efforts, activities for enjoyment of outdoor spaces, learning the stories reflective of our past, and a personal opportunity to grow and learn about themselves. A sense of appreciation for "America's best idea" is instilled with the participants as well as a consideration of career opportunities with the National Park Service.

Today they are youth with energy and enthusiasm participating in these pro-

grams and learning new skills; tomorrow they will become the leaders entrusted with these special places that represent our national heritage.

This year marks the fifteen-year anniversary of the Youth Conservation Program, the longest standing program in our suite of partnership youth efforts. As we celebrate, I look forward to reflecting on the diverse and inclusive youth engagement programs that are creating the next generation of park and public land stewards and leaders, and how we can continue to connect young people to our country's national parks and our natural and cultural heritage.

My appreciation to everyone involved with the Foundation and supporting the valuable youth programs that create emerging stewards of the National Park Service.





Chip and his wife Laurie, also a NPS employee, have always enjoyed spending time outside. They have two sons who were born while Laurie and Chip were living in Yosemite and were lucky to grow up in and around national parks.

## GETTING TO KNOW GRAND TETON'S SUPERINTENDENT CHIP JENKINS

**C**hip arrived at Grand Teton National Park in January. He has thirty-four years of experience working in and leading national parks, and most recently was the superintendent of Mount Rainier. We had the opportunity to learn more about Chip's connection to the outdoors, national parks, and Grand Teton.

### Did you have any impactful experiences as a young person that led you to a career in the NPS?

With time it's a bit easier to look back and see a path, but mainly I was just lucky. In middle school and early high school, I was fortunate to participate in youth backpacking programs where we would go for ten to fourteen days in the Sierras. In college, I participated in a program where we spent several months in Colorado and Utah meeting with county commissioners, conservationists, business leaders, NPS and National Forest Service employees, ranchers, educators, and other public lands stakeholders. It was a powerful impression to see how all of these people loved the land and how each, in their own way, were trying to contribute to the preservation of our heritage. I also had the opportunity to work for my university's outdoor program leading backcountry trips around the west. Taking groups of young adults and seeing the power of these places at work on their spirit made quite an impression. Working for the National Park Service has allowed me to continue to see and feel how much these places mean to people, which I find deeply rewarding.

### What was your first job in the NPS?

I started as a seasonal park technician at North Cascades National Park before I graduated from college. Working in the remote Stehekin District included a variety of responsibilities—everything from giving interpretive talks while driving a shuttle van, issuing backcountry permits, conducting patrols, fighting wildland fires, revegetating a trail re-route, trapping and relocating a black bear that raided a chicken coop, helping on search and rescues, and putting up hay

for the park stock. We all did essentially anything that needed to get done.

### What are you most enjoying in your new role as superintendent of Grand Teton National Park?

The synergy between the place and the people. This iconic landscape attracts and holds really smart, talented, and passionate people. Every hour of every day I have to try to be the best I can be in order to keep up. I love this challenge.

### What has surprised you during your first months in northwest Wyoming?

That I can watch and listen to wolves from my house. We've spent hours standing in the yard with binoculars watching and sometimes wake up at night to their howls. The world class skiing—backcountry, touring, track—within a fifteen-minute drive is amazing. Skiing with bear spray is a new one for me.

### What would you like to share with readers of the Foundation's newsletter?

I am hard pressed to find the words that convey the honor I feel to be here at this time. I understand that this is a large and ongoing experiment; the outcome of preserving this place was not fore ordained. People have done a lot of hard work, provided stunning levels of support, and had a willingness to face and work through conflict to find the best path forward. All of this, and more, will be needed if this experiment in how we co-exist, in a sustainable way, is to thrive into the future.





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Photo: Diana Stratton