

S U M M E R 2 0 1 9



TETON STEWARDS

NEWSLETTER of GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION



SNAKE RIVER GATEWAYS:

Connecting People and the River



“The river is the center of the land, the place where the waters, and much more, come together. Here is the home of wildlife, the route of explorers, and recreation paradise...Only fragments of our inheritance remain unexploited, but these streams are more valuable than ever.”

— Tim Palmer, Author of *The Wild and Scenic Rivers of America*

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act,

Grand Teton National Park Foundation, in partnership with Grand Teton National Park, is launching a multi-year campaign that will transform three popular river access points—Moose Landing, Pacific Creek Landing, and Jackson Lake Dam. **SNAKE RIVER GATEWAYS** will address inadequate facilities and environmental damage to better connect people with this magnificent resource.

Below the stunning peaks of the Teton Range, the Snake River meanders through Grand Teton National Park,

infusing the land with a vital essence to nurture and support the wildlife and habitats at the heart of the Grand Teton experience. Grizzly bear, elk, moose, otter, bald eagle, and gray wolf roam its shores, lowlands, and floodplain forests, accompanied by waterfowl who nest and forage at the river's edge. And darting just below the surface, Wyoming's native fine-spotted cutthroat trout thrive in a world-class fishery cherished for generations.

The Snake River has also long been a passage to connect people and nature. From the earliest Native Americans and settlers who relied on its natural abundance to present-day recreationists

and park visitors, its braided channels are fitting reflections of the timeless connection of people and its waters.

SNAKE RIVER GATEWAYS seeks to enhance and refine the experience at each access point. The project will highlight stunning viewsheds, improve the flow of visitors and watercraft, and reclaim sensitive natural areas while creating a new understanding and appreciation of one of the most iconic waterways in the West.

“At least half of all park visitors interact with the river at some point during their trip,” Grand Teton National Park Foundation President Leslie Mattson



said. “Working with our partners in the park, we are aiming to engage people in the incredible importance of this resource and inspire the next generation of park lovers and supporters.”

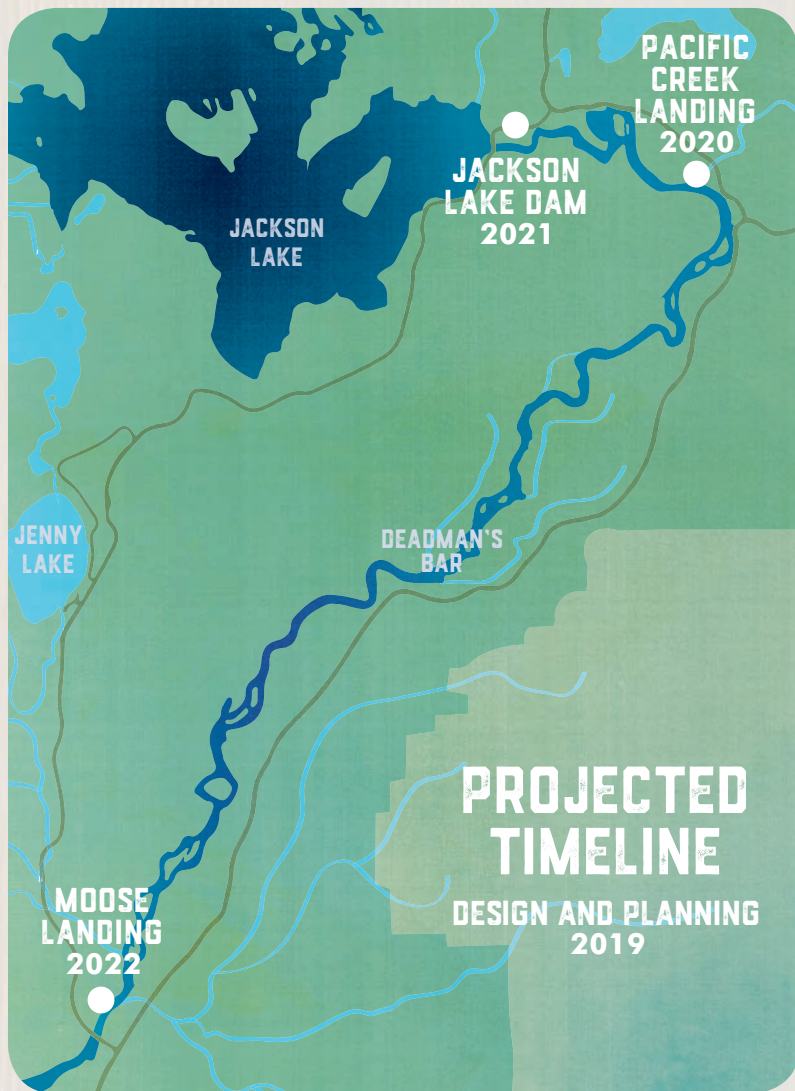
The Foundation’s preliminary fundraising goal of \$6 million, combined with \$1.8 million from the National Park Service, will provide a margin of excellence that would not be possible without private philanthropy.

Grand Teton National Park Foundation invites your support as a steward of the river to ensure the paths and passages along its waters are accessible, safe, sustainable, and foster a sense of connection for generations to come.

Learn more at www.gtnpf.org/SnakeRiver or contact Leslie Mattson at 307-732-0629 or leslie@gtnpf.org.

PROJECT PRIORITIES

- Functional improvements that prioritize safety to support visitors and recreationists of all abilities
- Educational elements to inspire mindful discovery and stewardship
- Restoration and resilience of shoreline habitats
- Added capacity to address resource protection and safety through volunteer Snake River Ambassadors



Photos: Ryan Sheets-rafting/fly fishing; Wade McKoy-FPI, Inc.-kayaking

Message from President
LESLIE MATTSON



Photo: Flo McCall

As the snowline slowly recedes up the slopes of the Tetons and the summer's first blooms fill the valley floor, I am reminded why I am grateful to call this place home.

This seasonal change is reminiscent of the incredible transformation that has taken shape at Jenny Lake. Upon arrival, visitors previously encountered user-created trails and inadequate information, which led to their most common question—where is the lake? This landmark now has a wonderful network of intuitive paths and educational displays that lead visitors to the lake-shore where unobstructed views await. Whether the visit to Jenny Lake ends here or continues to the updated trail system in the backcountry, we've achieved what we set out to do—inspire the millions who visit Jenny Lake to not only explore the beauty of this park, but to appreciate wilderness and the incredible experiences it provides. Thanks to all of the donors who helped make this possible.

I've recently been reminded of the “before” of Jenny Lake while touring three popular access sites along the Snake River—Moose Landing, Pacific Creek Landing, and Jackson Lake Dam. These destinations are used by thousands of people each year. Whether a visitor is launching a personal watercraft, loading onto a commercial raft, or just stopping to experience the river, the current state of each site fails to adequately steward this extraordinary waterway that was designated as Wild and Scenic just ten years ago.

We are pleased to share our next major partnership effort with Grand Teton National Park—**SNAKE RIVER GATEWAYS**. We've spent the last year working with engineers, designers, hydrologists,

and stakeholders to ensure that we strike a balance between access, safety, and natural resource conservation at each major access point. You can find more details in the pages of this newsletter. Work is slated to begin next summer, with the goal of completing the work in 2022. As with all of our projects, private philanthropy will augment the park's financial investment, raising the bar to create outcomes that would not be possible otherwise.

Thanks to all of our supporters for your dedication to our work in the park, we could not accomplish all we do without you.

Leslie Mattson

Leslie
President



In Memory of Scott Spangler
1938 - 2019

Scott Spangler served six years on Grand Teton National Park Foundation's board of directors, bringing dedication, creativity, and enthusiasm to every aspect of our work in partnership with the park. We are grateful for his incredible support of Grand Teton, and his unwavering passion, kind spirit, and bright smile are deeply missed.



Photos: Above-NPS; Center-Ryan Sheets

Success of Park's Bear Management Programs Highlighted in New Publication

Grand Teton National Park's Wildlife Brigade was created in 2007 in response to increasing presence of human habituated bears along roadsides. Habituation to human presence allows bears to use habitats near areas with high human activity, increasing the availability of resources and conserving energy by reducing unnecessary behavior, such as fleeing from unthreatening park visitors. The ability of bears to adapt to and survive in roadside habitats can be attributed to their intelligence, behavioral plasticity, and opportunistic lifestyle.

A recent scientific paper coauthored by Grand Teton National Park Bear Management Specialist Kate Wilmot, Foundation Ecologist Steve Cain, and others highlights Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks' roadside bear management programs—which successfully use proven concepts of habituated bear management on a much larger scale than ever attempted previously. Both focus on guiding the behavior of people that stop to view bruins along roads, which creates potentially dangerous situations of visitors in close proximity to bears.

Brigade staff help make human activity at “bear jams” as safe and predictable as possible by educating visitors on viewing etiquette and enforcing food storage regulations. The opportunities created provide positive visitor experiences, build appreciation for bears and their conservation, and contribute millions of dollars to local



economies. They also help mitigate negative impacts of roads on these magnificent creatures, like displacement from high quality habitats and reduced survival.

The article cites 17,000 black and grizzly bear jams that have been monitored in both parks as of 2017. During these events, no bear-inflicted human injuries or deaths have occurred and management removals, road kills, and property damage have remained low or declined. The authors acknowledge that habituated bears

may have increased chances of being approached too closely, fed, or finding improperly stored food or garbage, but so far these have not been problematic.

As bear populations regain ground around the world and come into closer contact with humans, innovative management strategies like these are important. In the long-term, park managers believe the most formidable challenge of managing habituated bears—here and elsewhere—will be sustaining and expanding human management programs that have made habituated bear management successful to date.

The Foundation's **WILD TREASURES** campaign helps support bear conservation on several fronts, including the Wildlife Brigade and String Laker volunteer programs (created specifically for the benefit of bears), as well as the bear box program.

The full article can be found in *Human-Wildlife Interactions*, Volume 12, Issue 3 or by visiting digitalcommons.usu.edu/hwi/vol12/iss3/7. Contact Steve Cain at steve@gnpf.org to learn more about the Foundation's **WILD TREASURES** campaign.



Photo: Brad Schwarm / Alpenglow Tours

Message from Grand Teton National Park Acting Superintendent GOPAUL NOOJIBAIL

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MISSION

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.



The mission of the National Park Service is the foundation for me and park employees in both our day-to-day work and strategic planning efforts. It is the basis for management activities in the park. Preserving the abundant natural and cultural resources of Grand Teton while providing a quality visitor experience can be challenging, but we take pride in meeting our responsibilities.

It is through partnerships and collaboration, such as with Grand Teton National Park Foundation, that the reach and capacity of the park is extended and enhanced. The support of the Foundation is remarkable and greatly appreciated.

Through our collaborative efforts, we are improving the quality and inclusiveness of the visitor experience. This is the visitor's lasting memory, the recognition that there is more to

learn, and the inspirational moment that takes their breath away.

For example, the creatively designed Jenny Lake overlooks and accessible locations are simply outstanding. It is through this thoughtful planning that all visitors can experience the incredible views and cold clear water of one of Grand Teton's most iconic destinations. The Jenny Lake Renewal Project will allow future generations, our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, to experience this spectacular place.

I'm also thrilled about the plans for the **Snake River Gateways** project. The visitor experience with the river will be enhanced through safe, accessible, and informative improvements, achieving resource stewardship goals and objectives. The Snake River is a vital component of the park and the region

through its historical, recreational, wildlife, and scenic values. This partnership project will celebrate our stewardship of the headwaters of one of the most important rivers in the West.

The mission of the National Park Service is on my mind as I reflect upon the completion of one major partnership project at Jenny Lake and contemplate the beginning of another along the Snake. I look forward to our continued collaborative work with the Foundation. We are fortunate to have so many individuals that contribute in numerous ways towards successfully meeting the mission of the National Park Service at Grand Teton National Park.



Photos: Bradly J. Boner

“Participating in the 2018 Schoolroom Glacier monitoring was a highlight of the summer for our family. Grand Teton’s team of scientists were fun and instructive. We felt like we were part of something important. The kids were totally engaged and we hope to participate again.”

—GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION VICE PRESIDENT MARK BERRY—

New Method Monitors Teton Glaciers

The Teton’s inspiring mountain scenery was partly created by a geologic force that we can still see much evidence of today—glaciers. These once gigantic ice masses, combined with uplift along the Teton Fault, have manifested the jagged peaks, U-shaped valleys, rock amphitheaters, and treed moraines that impound many of the lakes on the valley floor. Like extremely slow-moving bulldozers, glaciers moved downhill under the force of gravity, carving, sculpting, fracturing, and entraining rock and sediment along the way. As they retreated 10,000 years ago, immense volumes of sediment were left behind and redistributed by the Snake River, resulting in the relatively flat, gravel outwash plain that we know as Jackson Hole.

Today, the glaciers that remain are from a recent neo-glacial period from about 1400-1850, known as the Little Ice Age. Grand Teton has ten named glaciers, some of which are active, others considered remnant. Existing glaciers contribute

significantly to their surrounding environments, storing water at high elevations that is critical to the landscape, particularly in years of below-average precipitation. Changes in glacial extent and volume are significant indicators of a changing climate, and recent studies show rapid retreat and volume loss of glaciers in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Over the last fifty years, aerial imagery indicates that two significant park glaciers—Middle Teton and Teepee—decreased in area by twenty-five to sixty percent. Since 2015, park technicians and climbing rangers have conducted high-accuracy GPS surveys of the Middle Teton and Schoolroom glaciers. The overall trend was a significant decrease totaling 66,000 m³ (the equivalent of a half-meter decrease in surface elevation across the glaciers).

In 2018, with support from Grand Teton National Park Foundation, park staff initiated a citizen science monitoring project to create three dimensional

models of Schoolroom Glacier—one of the most iconic glaciers in the Tetons. Elevation surveys typically involve technical ice travel. However, this new, experimental method only requires taking a series of overlapping photos from multiple perspectives, ideal for avid hikers interested in contributing to scientific understanding. Sixteen volunteers took more than 5,000 photographs, which will allow park scientists to compare relative mass and elevation change of the ice surface over time—validating the methodology as a replacement for higher-risk surveys.

The park and Foundation plan to continue glacier monitoring citizen science efforts this summer. Interested in spending a day in the high country with your friends and family? Contact grte_glacier_monitoring@nps.gov for more information.

Simeon Caskey
Branch Chief Physical Science
Grand Teton National Park



Mailing: PO Box 249
Moose, Wyoming 83012

Physical: 115 East Pearl Ave., Suite 201
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

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Grand Teton National Park Foundation

Post Office Box 249 Moose, Wyoming 83012

t (307) 732-0629 f (307) 732-0639

www.gtnpf.org