

October 13, 2017

Re: Teton Raptor Center applications

Dear Teton County Planning Commissioners and County Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Teton Raptor Center's applications for a Zoning Map Amendment, an amended physical development plan, and a modified Conditional Use Permit.

The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance believes that we have a responsibility to write land use rules that align with our community's vision as articulated in our Comprehensive Plan. This is a vision of a community with walkable neighborhoods surrounded by protected open space, working agricultural lands, and connected wildlife habitat. A vision of a strong community living in balance with nature – with healthy, abundant, and sustainable wildlife populations.

The Teton Raptor Center does important work to “protect and preserve our area's ecosystem” – specifically, our charismatic raptor species – through a combination of education, research, and rehabilitation. We need organizations like the Raptor Center to be able to widely and effectively reach our community members and visitors, in order to encourage a stewardship ethic. And we need more research, in order to know more about how we can most effectively protect bird (and other) species through land development regulations and other local decisions.

The Raptor Center plans to improve their capacity in all this work through building and upgrading their facilities, including a dedicated flight chamber, program space, and employee housing. Significantly, they are making these upgrades while also working within an existing conservation easement.

We have reviewed the plans for development and spoken with planners and community members. The feedback we have received has all been positive, and we encourage you to approve all steps of this project – starting with a Zoning Map Amendment, and continuing through the development plan and Conditional Use Permit.

Please be in touch with any questions, and thank you for your commitment to our wildlife.

Sincerely,

Skye Schell
Civic Engagement Director
Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance