

June 4, 2021
Jackson Town Council
Teton County Board of County Commissioners

RE: Please fund the Ecosystem Stewardship Administrator position and create an Ecosystem Stewardship Department

Dear Mayor Morton-Levinson and Councilors,

Earlier this year, members of the Systems of Conservation group asked the Town of Jackson and the County Commission to create an Ecosystem Stewardship Department to address our community's conservation values and needs. We applaud the Town for answering that call to action and creating an Ecosystem Stewardship Administrator position in your proposed FY 2022 budget. We strongly urge you to approve this budget priority.

Each year, new concerns are introduced to the growing list of management issues regarding our wildlife, water quality, public lands, and climate. Threats to our ecosystem will only intensify as our residential population and visitation continue to grow. Despite the Comprehensive Plan vision statement "Preserve and protect the area's ecosystem in order to ensure a healthy environment, community and economy for current and future generations," we have no measurable goals, action plans, or staff in local government to address our ecosystem stewardship vision. Until now.

While the town and county face environmental challenges far greater than any one person can address, we are grateful for the proposed Ecosystem Stewardship Administrator position, a first in local government. We want to thank the Town of Jackson staff and elected officials for their leadership in ecosystem stewardship. We hope the County will make a similar commitment to our community by hiring a senior-level water quality specialist now and jointly funding the Ecosystem Stewardship Department in the future.

To show community support for this position and encourage its creation, we have gathered over 530 signatures on a "Create and Fund an Ecosystem Stewardship Department" petition, as well as raised grassroots funds to support the department.

Luckily, because Town revenues came in higher than feared, funding the Ecosystem Stewardship Administrator does not require an either/or choice between priorities: you can support both human needs *and* our ecosystem.

Please vote to approve the Ecosystem Stewardship Administrator position in the FY22 budget. This could be a big win for all of us – the community and the ecosystem – and we are grateful that the Town of Jackson is taking this step.

Sincerely,

The following members of the Systems of Conservation collaborative:

Chelsea Carson
Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance

Sharon Mader
National Parks Conservation Association

Kristin Combs
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates

Brandon Reynolds
Wyoming Outdoor Council

Jared Baecker
Snake River Fund

Dan Leemon
Protect our Water JH

Chris Colligan
Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Timothy O'Donoghue
Riverwind Foundation

Renee Seidler
Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation

Amy McCarthy
Teton Raptor Center

Frances Clark
Teton Plants

Peggie dePasquale
Wyoming Wilderness Association

Leslie Steen
Trout Unlimited