

Meeting Notes
Henry's Fork Watershed Council Field Tour
August 19, 2008

The Watershed Council's annual field tour was held August 19th in the Teton Basin. More than 24 attendees participated in the tour which was also a scheduled tour hosted by Friends of the Teton River (FTR).



The group carpooled to Badger Creek where the Badger Creek splitter is located. Mike Lein from FTR explained how the splitter is a long-standing structure built on a bend that converts the creek into more of a canal where some of the water is used for irrigation. Friends of the Teton River replaced the diversion structure last year with a concrete structure measuring 11

feet high with headgates that can be raised and lowered to regulate the flows. Since Badger still has native Cutthroat trout, there was concern that fish were able to go downstream structure served as a barrier for upstream passage. State of the art fish



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every 5

minutes. Each of the two screens are able to handle 30 cfs per screen; the maximum measured at this point to date is 48 cfs total.

This project has been a great measure of cooperation between FTR, many contractors in the area, funders, and irrigators. It was completed in the fall of last year and is fully functional. The final cost of the project was \$179,000.

The tour continued to Teton Creek where FTR is planning a \$1.2 million project on a one mile-long section of stream altered by a developer for flood control for many years.

Charles Lynn Moses was found guilty of felony violations of the Federal Clean Water Act, a president-setting case that left him with an 18-month prison sentence and a \$9,000 fine. Moses was contacted on several occasions and notified that modification to a stream channel require a permit under the Federal Clean Water Act. He ignored those warnings and continued to dredge Teton Creek by bulldozing and filling in more than 4,000 feet of side channels. The main stem was straightening pushing up gravel and altering the stream bed and destabilizing roughly 2 miles of the creek downstream. The altered stream dynamics caused headcuts that scoured and cut banks causing the sides to fall in from increased water velocity.

FTR, along with state and local governments, landowners, developers, and concerned individuals formed the Teton Creek Stakeholders Committee were made to restore the creek. A preliminary plan was written and design reviewed by the committee. A conceptual design has been considered and phase of the project began by stabilizing the rapidly eroding banks to the homes adjacent to the creek from floods. A final plan is due in the months and permitting will begin this winter. In March of 2009 work will re-establish the floodplain to a functioning condition that will handle large events, provide fish habitat, and restore the riparian corridor. The creek bed will be stabilized by creating a bankfull channel with sufficient base material.



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This project was WIRED by the Council in 1997 and received the Council's endorsement which helped leverage funding for the project. FTR has received \$144,000 through a grant from the Department of Environmental Quality; FTR and the committee are currently working to secure the remainder of funds necessary to continue work on Teton Creek.

The next stop on the tour was at the Toni Hill property where FTR and the Teton Regional Land Trust (TRLT) participated in a joint project using an innovative bio-

engineering technique that uses wetland sod to stabilize stream banks along a cattle pasture. Bio-engineering techniques use ecological sustainability instead of mechanical solutions to rebuild and revegetate banks to re-establish native sedges and grasses. Banks were recontoured and rolls of matt material were terraced into the banks to stabilize and establish vegetation. Willows were harvested and then willows plugs planted into deep holes with the help of volunteers. This restoration project replaced 1,065 feet of eroding stream banks.



After lunch, the group visited the TRLT office where Matt Lucia introduced staff members including the new Executive Director, Conrad Kramer. Matt, Rob Cavallaro, and Tamara Sperber gave an update on completed conservation easements, restoration projects, stewardship and outreach, and future conservation challenges.

The land trust has been operating since 1990 when the general focus was the Teton Valley. It has since expanded to a service area that covers six counties in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. TRLT works with willing landowners to protect important ecological areas and to conserve open space through easements and other conservation tools. TRLT recently celebrated 25,000 acres of protected lands in the Upper Snake River Valley.