



## JACKSON HOLE LAND TRUST NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Date: March 18, 2016**

Contact: Laurie Andrews, 307-733-4707, [laurie@jhlandtrust.org](mailto:laurie@jhlandtrust.org)

---

### **Jackson Hole Land Trust Completes Second Phase of East Gros Ventre Butte Project** 62 Additional Acres of Sage Grouse and Mule Deer Habitat Protected

**Jackson, Wyoming** – The Jackson Hole Land Trust announced today that the 62-acre second phase of an ambitious initiative to conserve highly visible open spaces and crucial wildlife habitat on East Gros Ventre Butte has been successfully completed.

East Gros Ventre Butte is a prominent landform located just north of the town of Jackson along U.S. Highway 26/89/191 and adjacent to the National Elk Refuge and Grand Teton National Park. It is a major component of the signature view from the Town of Jackson towards the Tetons. Flanked to the west by the relatively undeveloped Spring Gulch, it is a central wildlife migration corridor for the Jackson Hole area and provides habitat for greater sage grouse, mule deer, moose, bighorn sheep, raptors, songbirds and many other wildlife species.

The newly conserved acreage is located on the eastern slope of East Gros Ventre Butte, to the north of as well as above the cluster of businesses along the highway that includes the Elk Refuge Inn, Flat Creek Inn, and Wilcox Gallery. It is comprised of two individual 41.5-acre and 20-acre conservation easements donated to the Jackson Hole Land Trust by landowners Kevin and Shelley Turner. The conservation easements eliminate all development rights on the property for the sake of robust protection for wildlife, in particular wintering sage grouse and mule deer. This project was originally initiated by the Kerr Foundation, which has worked for years with the Jackson Hole Land Trust to find solutions that protect the visual and wildlife values along the corridor between GTNP and the town of Jackson.

“We were excited for the opportunity to extend and enhance existing land conservation efforts on East Gros Ventre Butte. Once you are on the land, it is easy to understand the importance of preserving it. The notable presence of wildlife and the seemingly endless slopes of sagebrush evoke a feeling of responsibility to keep the area as pristine as possible,” said landowner Kevin Turner.

The 181-acre first phase of the Jackson Hole Land Trust’s East Gros Ventre Butte Project, located on the northeastern end of the butte, was completed in November 2013 and similarly extinguished all residential, industrial, and commercial development rights, eliminating 5 potential homesites and associated access roads that could have zig-zagged up the east face of the butte. The Phase 1 conservation easement was purchased by the Land Trust with significant support from the Pike H. Sullivan, Jr. Revocable Living Trust, the Meg and Bert Raynes Family Trust, the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, The Conservation Fund, the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, several anonymous private donors, and the current landowner of the conservation property.

“Securing additional conservation easements on the face of East Gros Ventre Butte is a huge win for the community and wildlife population of Jackson,” said Laurie Andrews, Jackson Hole Land Trust Executive Director. “Ensuring further connectivity of open space in such a visible location

---

JACKSON HOLE



LAND TRUST

## JACKSON HOLE LAND TRUST NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Date: March 18, 2016**

Contact: Laurie Andrews, 307-733-4707, [laurie@jhlandtrust.org](mailto:laurie@jhlandtrust.org)

---

that serves as crucial habitat for sage grouse and mule deer as well as a migration route into the Elk Refuge has been a priority for the Land Trust. We are grateful to the Turner family for their generous donation and applaud their commitment to conservation in the valley.”

The goal of the three-phase East Gros Ventre Butte Project is to conserve over 300 acres of land on the butte. The project area lies within the Jackson Core Area for greater sage grouse and is used by wintering sage grouse from active mating sites nearby. Greater sage grouse – large, ground-dwelling birds native to Wyoming and ten other Western states – have experienced troubling declines, which has inspired concentrated efforts by Federal, State, and private land owners to eliminate primary threats to their habitat.

“These easements act to further protect important habitats and some impressive, nearly pristine, vegetative communities on the steep slopes of East Gros Ventre Butte. From a landscape perspective, the protection also advances conservation more widely as the parcels abut other conservation easements and National Elk Refuge lands on the west side of the highway and within the greater sage grouse core area,” said Steffan Freeman, Land Steward at the Jackson Hole Land Trust. “Eliminating the development potential from the properties will maintain the prominent viewshed above the National Elk Refuge and for residents and travelers visiting the national parks.”

The East Gros Ventre Butte Project is a signature project of the Jackson Hole Land Trust’s *Forever Our Valley* capital campaign. The purpose of the \$35 million campaign, which began in its quiet phase in 2012, is to generate funding that provides the necessary financial resources to secure conservation easements on priority projects like East Gros Ventre Butte. Thus far, the *Forever Our Valley* campaign committee and Land Trust board have worked to secure critical funding from generous leadership donors to protect over 600 acres of high priority conservation land in the valley, including the East Gros Ventre Butte, Rendezvous Park, and Spring Gulch Meadows conservation projects.

### **About the Jackson Hole Land Trust**

The Jackson Hole Land Trust is a private, non-profit organization that was established in 1980 to preserve open space and the critical wildlife habitat, magnificent scenic vistas, and historic ranching heritage of Jackson Hole. By working cooperatively with the owners of the area’s privately owned open lands, the Jackson Hole Land Trust has ensured the permanent protection of over 25,000 acres in and around Jackson Hole and the Greater Yellowstone Area. For more information please visit [www.jhlandtrust.org](http://www.jhlandtrust.org).