



JACKSON HOLE LAND TRUST NEWS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 14, 2017

Contact: Laurie Andrews, 307-733-4707, laurie@jhlandtrust.org

Jackson Hole Land Trust Announces Overhead Utility Line Burial Initiative for Existing Conservation Easement Protected Properties

In close partnership with Lower Valley Energy, the Jackson Hole Land Trust will launch the initiative with a pilot project at Snake River Ranch

Jackson, Wyoming – The Jackson Hole Land Trust (JHLT) announced today an exciting new partnership with Lower Valley Energy (LVE), the local cooperative and utility provider for Teton County. JHLT will be working closely with LVE on this new initiative created to assist with the burial of overhead utility lines on existing conservation easement properties along scenic highway corridors in JHLT’s service area. The initiative will launch with the pilot project at Snake River Ranch which will extend LVE’s existing plans to bury utility lines from the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort to the Snake River Ranch by up to an additional 2,700 feet.

This fall, Lower Valley Energy (LVE) will be burying its utility lines downed last winter from Teton Village south to the location where the last pole failed. The abrupt transition of the utility lines from underground to overhead at this specific location would have compromised the scenic values of this conservation property with new large utility poles erected to carry utility lines across a significant portion of the highway to the north and south of the Snake River Ranch entrance. Since the buried line cannot be placed inside a highway right of way, Snake River Ranch is donating a 20-foot wide utility easement parallel to upper 390 for the full length of the buried line.

The Snake River Ranch conservation easements consist of 1,845 acres that were protected by the Jackson Hole Land Trust in 1984. Much of the scenic vistas and ranchlands on the approach to Teton Village and Grand Teton National Park along Highway 390 are protected by these easements which contain agricultural, scenic, and wildlife conservation values.

The Jackson Hole Land Trust is committed to preserving and enhancing the conservation values of easement-protected properties and has provided necessary resources to fund the burial of up to an additional 2,700 feet of utility lines in order to relocate the transfer infrastructure out of the highly visible Snake River Ranch meadowlands and into tree cover. This effort is part of JHLT’s larger vision to partner with LVE in the future on additional line burial projects located on easement properties that directly impact the community and the scenic values of the land.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Jackson Hole Land Trust on this effort to move a portion of the utility lines on Highway 390 underground,” said Lower Valley spokesman

Brian Tanabe. “The extension of the line burial to the South on the Snake River Ranch will provide the community with not only scenic advantages, but also an even greater safeguard against power outages by sheltering an increased length of utility lines from wind, snow, ice and tree damage, meaning fewer outages and less damage when they do occur.”

In February 2017, 17 power lines fell in a winter storm that caused power outages in Wilson and Teton Village for five days, causing an estimated \$5 million in losses. The Jackson Hole Land Trust is eager to be a part of a solution that will benefit the community’s open spaces as well as provide protection against harsh winter storms and weather.

“There are several key easement properties that we are hoping to target with this initiative,” said Peter Lawton, Chairman of the Jackson Hole Land Trust’s Board of Directors. “Snake River Ranch makes a lot of sense as a pilot project because of the work and investment that Lower Valley Energy is already putting into the line burial along Highway 390 from Teton Village.”

Working together, the Jackson Hole Land Trust, the private landowners, and Lower Valley Energy hope to leverage this initiative to the community’s benefit by reducing the visual impact of utility lines and poles; saving scenic beauty, improving safety, and reducing utility disruptions and association costs.

###

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 Western Wyoming. 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 55,000 acres in and around Jackson Hole and the Greater Yellowstone Area including Fremont and Sublette counties.

About Lower Valley Energy

Lower Valley Energy is a cooperative and the local energy provider. We serve up to Flagg Ranch in Yellowstone, down to Smoot past Afton, over to Wayan in Idaho past Freedom, and east to Kendall and Cora. We are focused on exceptional customer service, reliability, and low rates. We serve electricity, natural gas, and propane and have offices in Afton and Jackson.