

JH, Green River Valley land trusts to merge

Two have protected many thousands of acres.

By John R. Moses

The wind picked up as the music died down as 750 guests at Fish Creek Ranch finished dining on hearty picnic fare.

Jackson Hole Land Trust Executive Director Laurie Andrews was about to deliver some good news at the annual picnic: A merger was born.

The Green River Valley Land Trust and the Jackson Hole Land Trust will be one as of Oct. 1, when easements from the Green River trust will be transferred to the Jackson Hole trust.

"This really is a success story," Andrews said.

The Jackson Hole Land Trust helped to form the Green River Land

Trust in 2000.

The new organization will establish a Green River Valley Program of the Jackson Hole Land Trust with board members and employees based in Sublette County.

"This is an exciting time to be thinking about the big picture of land conservation in Wyoming," Jenny Wolfrom, the Jackson Hole Land Trust's director of development and communications, said in a press release, "and the Jackson Hole Land Trust is happy to be at the table to help make conservation efforts in Sublette sustainable and forward-thinking."

The 58 Green River Valley Land Trust easements represent 32,212 acres.

"This is a proactive approach by two conservation organizations to become more sustainable and to safeguard the future of Sublette County's

ranch lands, open space and wildlife habitat," Bob Budd, executive director of the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, said in a Sunday press release. "Proper stewardship of conservation properties in this region is critical to maintaining important, large-scale wildlife migration corridors that run across two major mountain ranges, along three primary river systems, in all directions, and to preserving important ranchlands that contribute to the agricultural resources and heritage of Sublette County."

The Green River group had been preparing to distribute its easements to other land trusts when talks began about incorporating those easements with the Jackson Hole Land Trust.

"We believe that this is a great opportunity to ensure the future of our easements and honor our commit-

ment to the landowners," Brian Gray, president of the Green River Valley Land Trust's board, said in the same Sunday release. "We are grateful to all those that have worked so hard to get us to this point so that we can continue our local presence and the wonderful work in Sublette County."

The Jackson Hole Land Trust has been in existence for 36 years, working with more than 220 landowners to create conservation easements on more than 25,000 acres in Teton County and through the Wind River Program in Fremont County, the release said.

The Green River group's procurement of easements on its 32,212 acres involved working with 44 landowners.

Contact John R. Moses at 732-7063 or john@jhnewsandguide.com.



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