



JACKSON HOLE LAND TRUST NEWS
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Jackson Hole Land Trust Completes 313-Acre East Gros Ventre Butte Project

Jackson, Wyoming – Today marks the completion of the third and final phase of the landscape scale East Gros Ventre Butte conservation project by the Jackson Hole Land Trust (JHLT) which ensures the protection of critical wildlife habitat, the connectivity of migration corridors, and that the inspiring views of the Tetons above the National Museum of Wildlife Art will remain for future generations of residents and travelers.

The 313-acre stretch of newly protected land facing the National Elk Refuge is highly visible from Highway 89 on the route to and from Grand Teton National Park. The elimination of development opportunity from a significant portion of the butte has removed the potential for nine home sites and a large road switch-backing across the face of the butte and has safeguarded important open space and wildlife habitat. The final phase of the priority project was successfully accomplished today with the closing of a 35-acre parcel on the eastern face of the butte.

The project's completion marked the conclusion of a three-phase Forever Our Valley capital campaign goal which began in 2013. Most notably, East Gros Ventre Butte is a central migration corridor, providing critical habitat for the greater sage grouse, mule deer, and migrating elk, in particular.

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.

The prominent and highly visible East Gros Ventre Butte is located just north of the town of Jackson along Highway 26/89/191, and is a major component of the signature view from the Town of Jackson towards the Tetons.

This final 70 acre phase is bordered to the north by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Elk Refuge land, to the west by a Teton County Scenic Preserve Trust easement, and to the south and east by two JHLT easements, one of 42 acres, and another of 181 acres.

The East Gros Ventre Butte project's three phases incorporated five parcels with six ownerships, including a combination of three donated and purchased conservation easements and two land acquisitions. The completion of the East Gros Ventre Butte project eliminates development rights on all 313 acres with the intention to provide robust wildlife protection, particularly for wintering sage grouse and mule deer, and migrating elk. The project further protects habitat for moose, raptors, songbirds, and countless other wildlife

species. In total, the entirety of the East Gros Ventre Butte project eliminates nine potential single-family homesites that could have dotted the hillside.

“Securing 313 protected acres on the face of East Gros Ventre Butte is a huge conservation win for the community and wildlife population of Jackson,” says JHLT President Laurie Andrews. “The Land Trust has prioritized this goal for many years, and is proud to have further ensured connected open lands that serve as crucial habitat for sage grouse and mule deer as well as an elk migration route into the Elk Refuge.”

To complete the final phase of the 313-acre project, JHLT purchased the remaining 35 acre parcel from Gold Star Exploration, LLC and continues to look for a neighbor interested in purchasing the fee interest with an easement in place.

A variety of landowners and several key donors were critical to the project, which involved dozens of individuals and organizations that worked diligently to ensure the land would be protected for generations to come. The Kerr Foundation originally initiated the project, and worked with the JHLT for years to find solutions that protect wildlife and open spaces between Grand Teton National Park and the Town of Jackson. Generous support for this project came from John and Adrienne Mars, 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 landowners of the conservation properties.

“These easements act to further crucial ranges and important habitats and some impressive, nearly pristine, vegetative communities on the steep slopes of East Gros Ventre Butte. On a wider scale, the protected lands bolster the abutting conservation easements and National Elk Refuge lands on the west side of the highway and within the greater sage grouse core area,” said Pete Lawton, JHLT Board Chair.

The East Gros Ventre Butte Project was a signature project of the Jackson Hole Land Trust’s *Forever Our Valley* capital campaign. The purpose of the \$35 million campaign was to generate funding that provided the necessary financial resources to secure conservation easements on priority projects like East Gros Ventre Butte. The *Forever Our Valley* campaign committee and Land Trust board worked to secure critical funding from generous leadership donors to protect over 700 acres of high priority conservation land in Jackson Hole, including the East Gros Ventre Butte, Rendezvous Park, and Spring Gulch Meadows conservation projects.

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About the Jackson Hole Land Trust

The Jackson Hole Land Trust is a private, non-profit organization that was established in 1980 to protect and steward the treasured landscapes of Northwest Wyoming including Fremont and Sublette counties. With over 55,000 acres protected, our vision is a legacy of protected open spaces, wildlife habitat, working lands and community spaces that inspire current and future generations. For more information, please visit jhlandtrust.org.