



SUMMER
2024

TETON STEWARDS

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION



Photo: Diana Stratton



THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE KELLY PARCEL

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

Standing on the Kelly parcel, surrounded by vast open space, one is immediately captivated by the breathtaking landscape of Grand Teton National Park. The cool, mountain air is crisp, wildflowers blanket the nearby hillsides, and birdsongs fill the rolling terrain.

As the sun rises, it casts a warm light on the meadows and mountains, revealing sweeping vistas of the stunning Teton Range and Jackson Hole valley. And yet, beyond the beauty lies a pressing need—to act now and conserve this piece of land so that current and future generations will continue to be inspired by its enduring legacy and wildness.

Totaling 640 acres, the Wyoming-owned Kelly parcel is the largest tract of unprotected land remaining within the boundaries of Grand Teton National Park. The elevated square-mile includes critical habitat for numerous species of wildlife and provides recreationists with extraordinary views. If the Kelly parcel is not permanently conserved as part of Grand Teton, this inholding is vulnerable to development, risking the loss of vital habitat in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem—one of the last remaining, nearly intact temperate ecosystems on the planet.

The Kelly parcel is state trust land, and the Wyoming legislature has approved a path for a direct sale of the parcel to Grand Teton. Grand Teton National Park Foundation is collaborating with our partners in the

park to make this vision a reality. Together, we have the opportunity—and responsibility—to protect this landscape for generations yet to come while also providing a significant investment in Wyoming public schools.

THE VALUE Critical Habitat for Wildlife

From a natural resource perspective, the area is invaluable. The parcel provides seasonal migration routes that have been used for thousands of years by elk, bison, moose, mule deer, and pronghorn. The *Path of the Pronghorn*, a lifeline that the Jackson Hole herd follow to and from wintering areas in the upper Green River basin, overlaps this land tract. A variety of raptors and numerous songbirds depend on this terrain for spring nesting. The region is also a focal point for wolf activity due to the high density of ungulates, and lies within the currently occupied range of threatened grizzly bears. Without permanent protection, development of any kind could put eighty-seven species of “greatest conservation need,” as identified by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, at risk.

continued



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- **SUMMER 2023:** Wyoming leaders gathered on the Kelly parcel to experience its value first-hand ahead of the approaching legislative session in early 2024. Many felt that selling the parcel for \$100 million was the price that a majority of state legislators could support in order to enable a direct sale to the National Park Service (NPS).
- **OCTOBER 2, 2023:** The Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments proposed disposing of the Kelly parcel via a public auction in Teton County, and a sixty-day public comment period ensued. Nearly 10,000 Wyoming citizens from across the state submitted comments and shared their viewpoint on the fate of this land—the overwhelming majority expressed the desire to see the parcel protected as part of Grand Teton National Park.
- **DECEMBER 7, 2023:** The State Board of Land Commissioners voted to table the auction and explore other options of conveying the land to the NPS. Our team immediately began pursuing the opportunity for a direct sale, which requires approval by the Wyoming state legislature.
- **JANUARY 18, 2024:** Wyoming's Joint Appropriations Committee passed a budget amendment that directed the State Board of Land Commissioners to sell the Kelly parcel for \$100 million to the NPS.
- **MARCH 23, 2024:** After a divisive legislative session, the Kelly parcel budget amendment prevailed and Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon signed the bill into law. This action approved a path for a direct sale of the Kelly parcel to Grand Teton National Park for \$100 million—a win for conservation advocates, national park enthusiasts, wildlife supporters, and Wyoming families.



THE FOUNDATION'S PAST SUCCESS OF CONSERVING STATE TRUST LAND IN GRAND TETON & PROVIDING FUNDING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

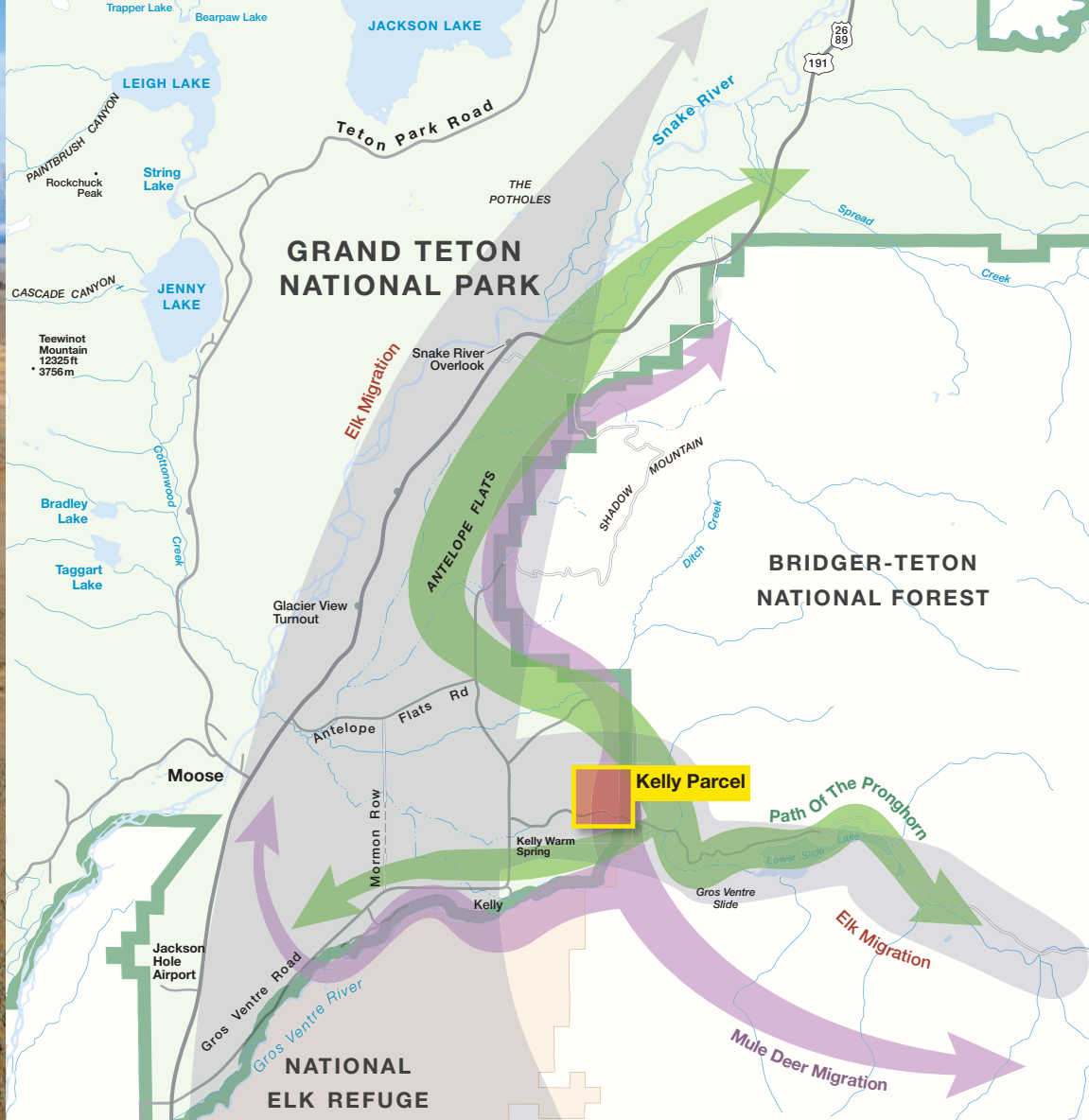
Grand Teton National Park Foundation has a proven history of successful land conservation purchases for protection in Grand Teton National Park. On December 12, 2016, the Antelope Flats parcel of state trust land—also within the boundaries of Grand Teton National Park—was purchased through a partnership between Grand Teton National Park Foundation, National Park Foundation, and the NPS. Private philanthropy contributed fifty-percent of the appraised value of \$46 million for the 640-acre parcel, and the federal LWCF provided the other half. That sale was authorized by a state bill that also authorized the sale of the Kelly parcel by the same deadline. Unfortunately, it was not feasible to secure the federal and philanthropic funds necessary to protect both parcels.

Investment in Wyoming Public Education

Many western states have school trust lands, deeded by the federal government at statehood, to be permanent endowments funding public education. In Wyoming, the Kelly parcel is the last state asset that is located entirely within Grand Teton National Park. The Wyoming constitution requires that trust lands make income to support public schools, and the Kelly parcel currently generates roughly \$2,800 annually through various leases.

A LASTING LEGACY: Public-Private Partnership Solution

The Wyoming legislation that passed in March approved a direct sale of the Kelly parcel to the NPS for \$100 million. Grand Teton National Park is securing \$62 million from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and Grand Teton National Park Foundation is raising \$38 million to purchase the property.



The Kelly parcel is bordered by Grand Teton National Park on the north, west, and south and the Bridger-Teton National Forest to the east. It is located at the terminus of the Gros Ventre River valley, which provides connection to and from summer habitat for migrating wildlife.



Together, we will provide \$100 million to Wyoming public schools while also conserving an extraordinary piece of land that will be enjoyed by visitors and conserved for wildlife in perpetuity. Grand Teton National Park Foundation and our partners are ready to meet this critical need that will facilitate a transformational gift to the American people.

**THIS IS A HISTORIC MOMENT,
THE HONOR OF PROTECTING
THIS LANDSCAPE FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS FALLS TO ALL OF US.**

We hope you will join this urgent, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help permanently conserve a critical piece of land in one of our country's most celebrated landscapes—visit gtnpf.org/kelly or contact Leslie Mattson at 307-732-0629 to support

**THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE
KELLY PARCEL.
THANK YOU!**

Message from President
LESLIE MATTSON



Summer has arrived in the Tetons—it a busy time of year, but also one of my favorites. This June marks my twentieth year of leading Grand Teton National Park Foundation. Reflecting on the last two decades, I am both proud and humbled by how far we've come.

What started as a team of three employees who were tasked with raising funds for a new visitor center has grown into a group of thirteen staff members who are dedicated to working collaboratively with our partners to support nearly thirty projects annually. Youth initiatives, wildlife research, trail improvements, historic preservation, and much more—our impact reaches all corners of Grand Teton National Park. Every visitor who experiences this special place benefits from our work together. The Foundation's influence on the park would not be possible without our incredible supporters who love the Tetons as much as we do. Your dedication inspires us all to continue working

for our mission every day—thank you.

As we launch into another Teton summer, we are faced with our organization's biggest challenge yet—raising \$38 million by the end of the year to permanently conserve one square-mile of essential wildlife habitat in the park. The Kelly parcel is a significant piece of unprotected land within the boundaries of Grand Teton. If we are not successful, the 640-acre tract could be developed, which means all of the reasons this park is so extraordinary—the wildlife, the open space, the views—would be at risk.

There is more detail in the pages of this newsletter about our past success with inholding acquisition, how we got to where we are today, and what is at stake. I hope you enjoy learning more about this incredibly rare and crucial opportunity for our community and our nation. Everyone can play a role in helping to permanently protect the Kelly parcel, and I hope you will consider joining us at this critical moment in Grand Teton's history.

Thank you again for your support!
Leslie Mattson

President



BEYOND PRESERVATION: THE GRAND VISION FOR MORMON ROW

In 2021, Grand Teton National Park and Grand Teton National Park Foundation launched a multiyear effort—Renewing Life on Mormon Row—to restore and enhance the park’s most beloved and popular historic district.

The complex project combines direct rehabilitation of vulnerable, culturally significant buildings with site improvements that will help visitors meaningfully connect to Mormon Row and park history.

Accomplishments to date include the complete repair and preservation of the Pink House (part of the John and Bartha Moulton Homestead) and the initial phase of restoration of the main house and bunk house at the Roy Chambers Homestead, which will be adaptively reused for workforce housing. In the

coming years, a holistic improvement of the visitor experience at Mormon Row, including modern educational displays, improved wayfinding, and added facilities, will make the popular area more accessible—and enjoyable—for all.

The park and Foundation have assembled a team of experts to ensure *Renewing Life on Mormon Row* honors the legacy of the historic district. We recently spoke with this group to learn more about their specific roles, how their passions influence their work, and what excites them about the project.

continued



Kate Birmingham
Grand Teton National Park
Branch Manager of Cultural Resources

I serve as a subject matter expert for the Mormon Row Historic District project. The landscape—its houses, barns, outbuildings, and incredible irrigation infrastructure—allows us to share the story of the town of Grovont and its travails, successes, and ties to tourism. It’s stunning views and density of still-standing structures allow us to remind visitors that it was once a bustling town despite its current quiet isolation.

In the winter of 2018, I started monitoring the cracks in the Pink House stucco so that we could respond if the damage accelerated. When the time came in 2020 that a section of stucco may not survive another season, I was absolutely humbled and proud that this community—the park, Foundation, and partners—responded to the emergency and saved the building.

I absolutely adore the structures—one of the great boons of historic preservation is that you really get to know a place, and if you’re lucky, to feel like you know the people who lived there. I’m very excited to eventually show the public through online media the interior of the Pink House so that they can share in Bartha Moulton’s joy in home decorating. My greatest hope is that, when this project is completed, visitors of all ages and abilities will be able to spend time together learning about the town of Grovont and its incredible residents.



Courtney Mansfield
Grand Teton National Park
Historical Architect & Project Manager

I oversee planning and construction for the project, including the Pink House preservation, Roy Chambers rehabilitation, and the Mormon Row Cultural Landscape plan. Many park visitors come to the site to see the iconic barns for their setting against the Tetons, but they leave without experiencing the district as a whole. It’s exciting to be a part of a project that is bringing these historic buildings back to life, which we experienced first-hand with the Pink House when work there finished in 2022. With its stucco repairs and new windows, you can now see inside the building and get an idea of what it would have been like to live there.

This project has also uncovered some interesting surprises. For example, through reviewing historic documents and photos, I thought I had a good idea about what additions took place and when on the Roy Chambers Homestead. When we lifted the residence off of its failing foundation in 2023, we could study the building from underneath, which told a completely different story. The varying levels and angles of the floor structure made it difficult to pour a matching foundation. Working with experts, we were able to set the building down almost perfectly onto its new foundation last fall. I’m honored to be part of this project that will provide visitors a more meaningful experience at Mormon Row for years to come.



Jessica Brown
Grand Teton National Park
Branch Chief of Project Management

My role involves collaborating with Courtney Mansfield to strategize and oversee the project’s progression. We work with a team of park professionals to create quality, impactful designs that respect and highlight the area’s historical significance.

The aspect of this project that excites me the most is the design process, specifically integrating subtle, thoughtful elements that engage visitors deeply with the landscape and its history. Implementing shaded sitting areas, rustic walking paths, designated photo spots, and other amenities will help create a seamless and memorable journey through the entire Mormon Row Historic District.

A moment in the project that I particularly enjoyed was our work to define desired conditions for the renewed visitor experience at Mormon Row. This process involved a diverse team of park professionals and required us to envision how each area could serve a unique purpose—be it a prime location for photography, educational spots about historical agricultural practices, or areas designed for contemplation and enjoyment of the natural scenery. This effort highlighted the complexity and depth of thought that goes into every aspect of this and all our projects. Together as a team, we strived to create a vision for a diverse yet cohesive visitor experience for this important location.



.....

Work at Mormon Row continues this summer with a focus on renovations at the Roy Chambers Homestead so it can be utilized for workforce housing. On-the-ground improvements to wayfinding, interpretation, and facilities will begin in 2025. We are grateful for the enthusiasm and collaboration with park experts to bring this beloved cultural destination to life for visitors to enjoy for decades to come!

Message from
Grand Teton National Park Superintendent
CHIP JENKINS



Chip enjoying the view on the Kelly parcel this past winter.

Just over 100 years ago, the local community came together and agreed to preserve a portion of the Jackson Hole valley.

They recognized that this place held significant value due to its unique characteristics, including the landscape and the wildlife that called it home. The group sought protection from “tawdry development” that had already taken over other scenic valleys in the West.

From that point forward, private, philanthropic support has been central to the history of Grand Teton National Park. It is a peoples’ park that has grown and changed as our conservation-minded community continues to leverage support to purchase and donate land within and around the park’s legislated boundary. As recently as 2016, private philanthropy, with the leadership of Grand Teton National Park Foundation, assisted the park to purchase the Antelope Flats state land parcel and annex it into the protection of Grand Teton.

This legacy of the community coming together to set aside and preserve park lands for future generations continues to inform how Grand Teton National Park serves visitors—locally, nationally,

and internationally—while protecting the scenery, wildlife, flora, and natural resources that are only found in this special place.

This spring, the community has once again come together to identify and advocate for the preservation of one remaining important piece of land within the park’s boundaries, the Kelly parcel. With special appreciation to Grand Teton National Park Foundation and the State of Wyoming, legislation has been passed allowing for the direct purchase of this one-square mile from the state for inclusion within the park.

These 640-acres are important to the scenic landscape of the Jackson Hole valley, but are even more vital as a corridor for the wildlife that use Grand Teton

National Park as their summer home. As with everything that makes this park unique, the National Park Service does not, and especially in this case cannot, do this important work alone. Philanthropic support from constituents like you is what makes it possible to preserve this parcel and bring it into the park to be protected for future generations. We recognize that Grand Teton National Park is fortunate to have the incredible and unwavering support of our primary philanthropic partner, Grand Teton National Park Foundation. Thank you for being a part of this legacy.

With gratitude,
Chip Jenkins



KEEPING IT GRAND: THE WORK OF SCIENCE AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

Grand Teton is a wonderland of sweeping views, undiscovered adventures, and provides a chance to connect with the natural world. It is a place many call home, where bald eagles stand watch, wolves thrive, and grizzly bears reign supreme.

As a national park, Grand Teton receives among the highest level of public land protection for ‘the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of the American people.’ But Grand Teton is more than the sum of its parts. It is a highly complex, interrelated system of physical and ecological processes influenced subtly by thousands of years of human habitation.

Yet for all its permanence, it is also a landscape of change. Some change is always occurring. Other changes, like a shifting climate, visitation patterns, and demographic land use, are harder to anticipate. In an integrated and functional ecosystem, pushing on one

part of the system can result in unintended consequences to another.

Grand Teton National Park’s Science and Resource Management Division (SRM) seeks to understand natural and cultural resources through science that informs park management. Whether hiking in the backcountry, viewing wildlife from your vehicle, or taking in the scenery, this division has influenced your experience.

SRM work is conducted by a team of professionals with a unique set of skills and knowledge. The work itself includes reviewing park projects through a conservation lens and restoring and protecting

natural resources. In addition to research, monitoring, and conservation projects focused on specific species or resources, arguably the most important role of SRM is to understand Grand Teton as an inter-related, inter-dependent system. This means not managing each resource on its own, but rather understanding how all resources—vegetation, wildlife, water, and landscape—are inextricably linked. Key to this is understanding where ecological processes may be most vulnerable. The team’s ability to do this work is enabled by direct support provided by Grand Teton National Park Foundation and other collaborating partners.



Park scientists monitor alpine glaciers in the high peaks and outflows from Jackson Lake Dam as part of a comprehensive study to better understand the impact of climate change on the Snake River watershed.

“...the most important role of SRM is to understand Grand Teton as an inter-related, inter-dependent system. This means not managing each resource on its own, but rather understanding how all resources—vegetation, wildlife, water, and landscape—are inextricably linked.”

SRM focuses on designing research to understand causal relationships, especially around unexpected ecological events. For example, if we understand how Jackson Lake Dam ramping rates (the rate of flow change) impact fish habitat, we can improve flow management. Such understanding further ensures the wild and scenic values of the Snake River—the heart of this valley and park ecosystem—are protected. We can also build resilience into the broader ecological system by managing for positive response or an adaptive advantage through understanding of ecological vulnerability. It means providing buffers for habitat, wildlife, and resources to increase their ability to bounce back from detrimental events.

One of SRM's notable achievements is a decades-long effort with state and federal partners, and supported by the Foundation, to better understand wildlife migrations. Thirty years ago, we did not have the technology to track specific

daily movement patterns of wildlife. With advances in GPS tracking technology and spatial data analysis, park biologists have identified specific migration routes and seasonal patterns. This means we know why certain areas are ecologically important and can now work collaboratively to protect them—ensuring critical habitat, both in and outside of park boundaries, remains for a variety of species to utilize in perpetuity.

It is complex yet simple. Understanding ecological function, critical vulnerabilities, management options, and where investments of time and funds achieve the greatest conservation outcomes is Grand Teton National Park's strategy to ensure this landscape continues to thrive. It is the cornerstone of managing this place and providing an experience full of enjoyment, education, and inspiration for generations to come.

This article was written by Yvette Converse, Grand Teton National Park's chief of science and resource management.

SRM Projects Supported by Grand Teton National Park Foundation in 2024:

- Conserving the 640-acre Kelly parcel
- Tracking Snake River Health & Climate Change
- Wolf Research & Monitoring
- Nutritional Carrying Capacity of Bighorn Sheep
- Songbird Monitoring
- Whitebark Pine Conservation
- Pika Monitoring in a Changing Climate
- Restoring Wildlife Habitat in Sagebrush-Grasslands
- Volunteer Teams to Enhance Visitor Education & Resource Protection: Wildlife Brigade, String Lakers, and Snake River Ambassadors