



Grand Teton

# GRAND GLIMPSE

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2024 STATE OF THE PARK



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*Information presented in this report is from reference year 2023 and was compiled in 2024.*



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## PARK PURPOSE

The purpose of Grand Teton National Park is to preserve and protect the spectacular scenery of the Teton Range and the valley of Jackson Hole; protect a unique geologic landscape that supports abundant, diverse native plants and animals and associated cultural resources; protect wildlands and wildlife habitat within the Greater Yellowstone area, including the migration route of the Jackson elk herd; and to provide opportunities for enjoyment, education, inspiration, and scientific investigation compatible with these resources for present and future generations.

The purpose of the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway is to commemorate the many significant contributions of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to the cause of conservation and provide both a symbolic and desirable physical connection between Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park.

## CREATING A CROWN JEWEL

- 1929** Congress established Grand Teton National Park
- 1943** President Franklin D. Roosevelt established Jackson Hole National Monument with a 35,000-acre donation from John D. Rockefeller, Jr.
- 1950** Grand Teton National Park established with expanded boundary
- 1972** John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway established

The park and parkway are the homelands of 24 tribes with ancestral & cultural connections.



## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

We are honored to share the progress and successes we've achieved towards our strategic priorities for Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway this past year. Some of this work you may know about and much of it may pleasantly surprise you.

Every achievement in 2023 reflects the continued progress of addressing key issues, from the dynamic ecosystem, to changing visitation, and the evolving needs of our workforce.

The creativity, adaptability, and plain hard work of the teams and individuals who contribute to this success is impressive. We are grateful for each and every contribution, because the work we do is ultimately accomplished through collaboration. The park's success is a direct result of the dedicated people—employees, volunteers, and

partner organizations—who commit their time and energy to protect and conserve this inspiring place.

As we look ahead, we are committed to our shared core values and upholding the mission of the National Park Service by our work to protect the natural and cultural resources and to serve people today and for generations to come.

With your help and support, we will continue to remain committed to our strategic priorities: resource stewardship, exceptional visitor experiences, meaningful engagement, a thriving workforce, and organizational excellence. Thank you to each of you for contributing to the park's successes in the preservation, conservation, and stewardship of this amazing place.

We are grander together,

*–Chip Jenkins*  
Park Superintendent



# CORE VALUES

## Safety & Wellness

We believe parks are places to elevate health and well-being, where safety drives daily decisions.

## Integrity

We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.

## Inclusion

We all create a positive culture to safeguard equity, inclusion, and dignity for all.

## Excellence

We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.

## Respect

We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.

## Environmental Leadership

We provide guidance and motivation to effect environmental change.

## Shared Stewardship

We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.

## Partnership

We embrace collaboration, trust, and open communication with our partners to achieve shared goals.

## Tradition

We are proud of it, we learn from it, we are not bound by it.



A wide-angle photograph of a mountainous landscape at sunset. In the foreground, a body of water reflects the warm orange and yellow hues of the sky. A dense line of green trees marks the shoreline. Behind them, the rugged peaks of the Grand Teton range rise against a sky filled with soft, scattered clouds. The central peak, Mount Moran, is clearly visible, its dark silhouette contrasting with the bright sky.

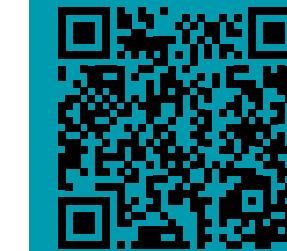
# REFLECTING ON THE YEAR

# RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Nestled in the heart of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE), Grand Teton stands as a vast, protected area, encompassing a diverse range of wildlife, plant species, geologic features, and pristine waters. As a crown jewel of the National Park Service, Grand Teton is dedicated to preserving the natural and cultural resources within its boundaries, acknowledging the intrinsic connection between the park's well-being and the broader ecosystem. In 2023, the park took various actions focused on resource stewardship, identifying and addressing potential threats, conserving wildlife populations, and adjusting management strategies accordingly. Through proactive measures, Grand Teton aims to safeguard these resources to ensure the richness of this extraordinary ecosystem remains intact and accessible for generations to come.

## Grand Migrations

Grand Teton National Park is a magical place renowned for its scenery and abundant migratory wildlife, but many of the animals that call the park home only live here for part of the year. Recent GPS tracking of migratory mule deer and other wildlife revealed that seasonal wildlife movement patterns radiate out in all directions from Jackson Hole to the far reaches of the GYE. For generations, these migration routes have sustained not only mule deer, elk, and pronghorn herds, but also provided food and resources for the Indigenous

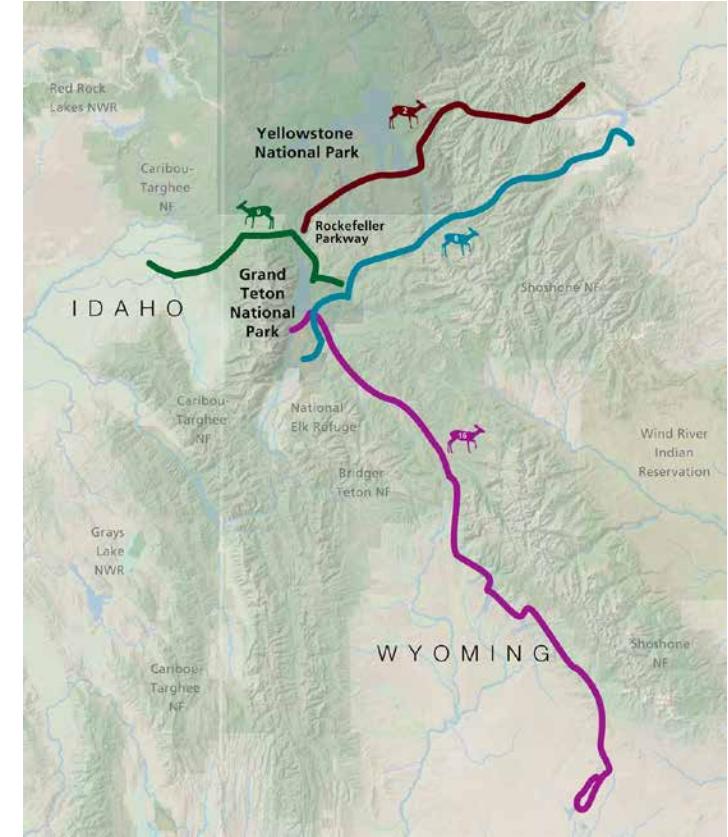


Watch *Animal Trails* & check out the *Grand Migrations* web feature at [go.nps.gov/tetonmigrations](http://go.nps.gov/tetonmigrations) or by scanning the code.



peoples who occupied these lands for thousands of years. Together, traditional knowledge, history, and science speak to the importance of these seasonal journeys made by wild herds, and this understanding is now inspiring people to work together to conserve the incredible migrations of the greater Grand Teton area.

Grand Teton is at the heart of the GYE that spans 22 million acres and is the most ecologically intact temperate ecosystem in the world. It covers parts of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, incorporating two national parks, six national forests, three national wildlife refuges, Bureau of Land Management holdings, tribal lands, state lands, and private lands. Protecting migration routes requires cooperation among diverse stakeholders due to the mix of public and private lands within the ecosystem. Federal protections and state designations, like Wyoming's Red Desert-to-Hoback mule deer migration corridor and the Path of the Pronghorn, a 200-mile migration from the desert of the Green River Basin to Grand Teton, are crucial to ensuring these corridors remain intact. Constructing overpasses and underpasses in high-use areas helps prevent wildlife-vehicle collisions. Collaborating with private landowners to implement wildlife-friendly fencing and



best management practices, and conservation easements is essential to maintaining connected corridors. By working together, we can preserve and support wildlife migration within the GYE. In 2023, a new film, *Animal Trails: Rediscovering Grand Teton Migrations*, was released, co-produced by the Wyoming Migration Initiative and Grand Teton National Park. The film is part of a new exhibit *Grand Migrations: Wildlife on the Move*, open at the Craig Thomas Discovery & Visitor Center (CTDVC) in Grand Teton. Visitors can see the film and exhibit during summer operations, at the CTDVC and Colter Bay Visitor Center.



### Health of the Snake River

Atypical snowpack conditions in the southern portions of the Upper Snake River basin prompted the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to consider reducing flows from Jackson Lake Dam to effectively store water and reduce water loss downstream. Hydrologic conditions developed in such a way that storage levels at Palisades Dam and downstream reservoirs were expected to reach storage maximums, while Jackson Lake's storage was well below storage capacity.

In May 2023, the State of Wyoming and Reclamation reached an agreement to use Wyoming water to supplement flows from Jackson Lake Dam to avoid impacts to fisheries and other natural resource values in Grand Teton National Park. The State of Wyoming supplemented flows

to protect minimum releases of 280 cubic feet per second (cfs), a flow previously shown to protect aquatic habitat. Wyoming committed to using its water storage allocation, up to a maximum of 33,000 acre feet, and Reclamation committed to covering any shortfalls beyond this amount. Reclamation continues to work with Wyoming, Grand Teton, and the community on a path toward long-term solutions that meet commitments for water delivery while protecting resource values through the operations of Jackson Lake Dam.

The 4.5-mile stretch of river below the dam is important habitat for Snake River fine-spotted cutthroat trout, shore birds, wildlife, bluehead suckers (a state of Wyoming species of greatest conservation need), and more. Partners are committed to understanding how flows affect

these resources and options to ensure they are protected.

Grand Teton is participating in the newly formed Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group, a community-based group led by Trout Unlimited focused on conservation and protection of the Snake River. The park, in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, is working with the State of Wyoming to quantify water rights associated with Wild and Scenic River designation. The process of quantifying and legally defining water rights can take many years. In this case, the

*"The Wild and Scenic Snake River in Grand Teton provides stunning views, world-class fishing and recreational opportunities, and excellent wildlife viewing. We appreciate the State of Wyoming and Bureau of Reclamation's joint efforts to ensure minimum flows from Jackson Lake Dam to protect these resources and experiences."*

-Chip Jenkins  
Grand Teton Park Superintendent

focus is mainstream and tributary reaches that may need to be legally protected to prevent possible future threats from water development or other competing uses. In 2023, Grand Teton continued to work with the University of Wyoming on their Wyoming Anticipating Climate Transitions (WyACT) project. WyACT facilitates co-

production of science and knowledge to develop cutting edge tools that will help Wyoming communities anticipate and adapt to climate change impacts on water.





### Habitat Restoration

For the past 16 years, Grand Teton park staff, through the support of Grand Teton National Park Foundation (GTNPF), have worked to restore the Kelly Hayfields. This multi-phase effort aims to restore approximately 4,500 acres of non-native grass fields to native sage-steppe species and sagebrush habitat.

Prior to the park's establishment, homesteaders cultivated large swaths of sagebrush habitat to hayfields for livestock purposes. These cultivated pastures have persisted, limiting their value to wildlife.

To date, 1,400 acres are in various stages of restoration, with areas containing diverse, well-established native plants that provide a source of food and shelter for a wide range of pollinators and wildlife who thrive on wildflowers, sagebrush, and other native plants.



In 2023, restoration efforts included 40 acres treated in the Slough South unit west of Mormon Row and 110 acres in the McBride unit south of the Jackson Hole Airport. The McBride unit specifically aims to restore vital greater sage-grouse habitat, and crews could see signs that those efforts were yielding positive results. Sage-grouse have been using the recently restored habitat.

The restoration process is more complicated than one might think. After non-native grasses were successfully removed, park staff dispersed a locally derived mixed-seed made up of native grasses, shrubs, and forbs. The park will continue to monitor and treat for invasive weed species, ensuring the successful re-establishment of these important plant communities for the long-term.

On August 9, 2023, Second Gentleman of the United States Douglas Emhoff and Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Shannon



Estenoz visited Grand Teton, where they toured sagebrush restoration sites supported by funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a nationwide effort to address climate change impacts by creating resilient landscapes through restoration activities. The IRA is investing \$1 million for on-the-ground sagebrush restoration in Grand Teton and other national parks. An additional \$105,000 from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help increase the availability and diversity of native plant seed needed for restoration. Restoration efforts in Grand Teton are primarily focused on sagebrush and whitebark pine.

Whitebark pine is a high elevation, five-needle pine species that grows in mountainous areas of the western US and Canada and provides snow retention, erosion control, cover for other canopy species, and food and habitat for wildlife. Whitebark pine has experienced significant declines range-wide and was listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in January 2023. Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway received IRA funding in 2023 totaling \$123,176 to implement conservation actions for whitebark pine. Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and Glacier national parks received \$99,500

from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in 2023 to support these efforts. This allows the National Park Service to implement a landscape approach to whitebark pine conservation across park units.

In addition to continued partnership with the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative, which leads efforts to place verbenone patches and mountain pine beetle traps in the park, Grand Teton, in partnership with American Forests, embarked upon a multi-year effort to restore whitebark pine through pioneering direct seeding trials in the Teton high country. This method involves planting seeds directly into the ground, as opposed to the more conventional approach of planting seedlings grown in greenhouses. This approach has potential to be a low-impact and cost-effective alternative to restore whitebark pine in remote locations. During Fall 2023, Grand Teton's vegetation branch and partners' staff planted 1,334 whitebark pine caches, with 2 seeds per cache, and mapped their locations as part of the study. With the support of GTNPF and other fund sources, the park will continue this work into the future.

### Minimize Spread of Invasive Plants

Invasive plants were treated with herbicides across a total of 3,840 acres of the park, including 273 acres of cheatgrass, a high-priority target invasive, as well as 884 acres of roadways where invasive plant species are known to proliferate. Vegetation Management staff salvaged 651 plants, planted 8,059 container plants and seeded 54 acres from areas disturbed through park projects. These salvaged plants will be used for post-construction and restoration projects as needed.



### Provide Protection for Bighorn Sheep

For the second winter in a row, the park implemented Teton Range bighorn sheep winter zones, asking backcountry skiers to voluntarily avoid certain areas high in the mountains in order to protect wintering bighorn sheep.

Winter 2022-23 was very hard on wildlife populations throughout Wyoming. The bighorn sheep that live in the Teton Range spend the winter at high elevation, in extreme conditions. Conserving energy is especially important for wildlife as temperatures plummet, snow buries food and travel is difficult. Animals like bighorn sheep, bison, deer, elk, and moose survive the winter by using the least amount of energy so they can maintain fat reserves, which is especially crucial for females to successfully produce young in the spring.

Areas closed to the public to protect important ungulate habitat during winter include:

- Summits of Mount Hunt, Prospectors Mountain and Static Peak: Dec. 1 through Apr. 30. In the spring of 2023, this closure was extended through May 15 due to persistent winter conditions and deep snowpack at high elevations throughout the Teton Range.
- Areas around the Snake River, Buffalo Fork River and Kelly Hill: Dec. 15 through Mar. 31
- Northern portion of Blacktail Butte (the open slopes on the southwest side of Blacktail Butte and the Practice Rocks climbing area at the northern tip of the butte remain open): Dec. 15 through Apr. 30
- Wolff Ridge and a portion of the Spread Creek drainage: Dec. 15 through Apr. 30

A georeferenced map of bighorn sheep winter zones is available for download at [tetonsheep.org](http://tetonsheep.org). All park closures and more information can be found at [go.nps.gov/tetonclosures](http://go.nps.gov/tetonclosures).

In 2023, Grand Teton created bighorn sheep stewardship signage for trailheads across the park and community for consistent messaging. The park also took the lead on an extensive social media stewardship campaign for this effort, in coordination with the Bighorn Sheep Working Group, which includes Grand Teton National Park, Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee national forests, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Further outreach consisted of newspaper articles, public events, and working with Grand Targhee Resort in regard to expansion into the bighorn sheep winter zones.



### Historic Properties Management

In partnership with Grand Teton National Park Foundation (GTNPF), the park worked to preserve and rehabilitate buildings at the historic Roy Chambers Homestead, part of the Mormon Row Historic District. The project will give new life to the unutilized buildings by converting them to employee housing. The first phase of the project began during the 2023 summer season, providing foundations for the main residence and bunkhouse buildings. The contractor moved the buildings off their foundations, removed them, and then poured new foundations and moved the buildings back onto their new foundations. Work will continue into 2024, including exterior preservation and interior upgrades to current codes and site improvements. Work on the Roy Chambers Homestead marks the continuation of

a multi-year public-private partnership project between the National Park Service and GTNPF that will preserve the entire Mormon Row Historic District. The Mormon Row Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. It offers visitors an opportunity to connect with the history of the park and understand the difficulty and isolation associated with the historic settlement in Jackson Hole, as well as experience the scenic beauty of the Tetons.

The historic Jackson Lake Lodge underwent emergency repairs after a sprinkler pipe burst on its third floor in December 2022. All repairs met historic compliance standards as identified in the historic properties management plan and were in cooperation with Grand Teton Lodge Company, who operates the building via concessions contract.

## Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention

Grand Teton works in partnership with Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) to provide education, watercraft inspections, and monitoring to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Watercraft inspections were provided at two AIS inspection stations in the park, seven days a week, during peak boating season to ensure park waters are not compromised. 21,484 watercraft were inspected and 28 decontaminations of high-risk boats were conducted.

The AIS of greatest concern to resource managers are quagga and zebra mussels. Both mussel species are ecologically harmful because they filter water and remove plankton, a vital food source for native aquatic species. Quagga and zebra mussels attach to all surfaces, as well as each other, and can live up to 30 days out of the water.



Economically, they foul infrastructure, increase maintenance costs, and impact recreation.

In September 2023, the Idaho Department of Agriculture reported finding quagga mussels in the Snake River near Twin Falls. In 2022, zebra mussel infestations were documented in the Pactola Reservoir in South Dakota and Highline Lake in Colorado. All of these areas are within a day's drive to Grand Teton National Park.

The park is collaborating with WGFD on a rapid response plan in the event that mussels are identified in Jackson Lake. The plan will include a long term, proactive, and sustainable AIS prevention program to ensure park waters are not compromised.

Also in 2023, Grand Teton partnered with Working Dogs for Conservation (WD4C) and



Teton County Weed & Pest (TCWP) to patrol the Snake and Gros Ventre rivers as part of the Snake River Project. This early detection and rapid response program aims to locate, remove, and eradicate the saltcedar shrub and the long-lived perennial pepperweed. Frost (pictured below, left) and his humans with WD4C, TCWP, and Grand Teton have been hard at work helping to prevent, detect, and map potential infestations.

## Bison & Elk Management

Grand Teton National Park is cooperating with the National Elk Refuge (NER) in the development of a new Bison and Elk Management Plan. Grand Teton National Park staff are participating in a structured decision-making process with the NER and other partners which aims to organize and analyze the consequences of decisions across a range of management objectives and system uncertainties, to aid in the decision-making process. The park also participated in multi-agency meetings related to state-operated elk feed grounds.

An elk reduction program took place Nov. 18 to Dec. 10, 2023, in Grand Teton. The park's enabling legislation of 1950 authorizes Grand Teton National Park to jointly administer an elk reduction program, with the WGFD, when necessary for the proper management and conservation of the Jackson Elk Herd.

Grand Teton and WGFD biologists reviewed available population and demographic data and management objectives for the Jackson elk herd and concluded that the 2023 program was necessary for the proper management of the population. A total of 40 permits were

authorized for the 2023 program and 10 elk were harvested.

With detection of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in three mule deer and an elk within Grand Teton National Park since 2018, the park has increased CWD surveillance efforts to include mandatory collection of elk heads from all elk harvested during the elk reduction program. Park personnel collected biological samples from the heads and submitted them to the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory for testing. In 2023, no positive cases of CWD were detected in Grand Teton. However, in March 2023, Yellowstone and WGFD confirmed the presence of CWD in a carcass of an adult mule deer buck, found near Yellowstone Lake in the southern section of neighboring Yellowstone National Park.





### Adapting Bear Management

On May 16, 2023, grizzly bear #399 was observed in Grand Teton with one cub-of-the-year. Based on long-term population data collected by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team (IGBST), grizzly bear #399 is the oldest documented grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) to have successfully reproduced at the age of 27. “She’s an ambassador for her species,” said Grand Teton Bear Biologist Justin Schwabedissen.

As the grizzly bear population expands, bears continue to disperse across their historic range and into more populated areas. All of Teton County is now within occupied grizzly bear habitat.

In 2023, Grand Teton continued several initiatives, including the Wildlife Brigade program and collaboration with Bear Wise Jackson Hole, to

adaptively manage the human-bear interface to protect both bears and people in the park and local community.

Since 2007, Grand Teton’s Wildlife Brigade has strived to provide exceptional wildlife viewing opportunities for park visitors while allowing wild animals unimpeded access to habitat. With support from the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, the program has grown tremendously. The brigade is currently composed of a bear biologist, 2 seasonal wildlife management rangers, and over 30 dedicated volunteers. Staff provide coverage seven days a week, from sunrise to sunset, during the summer. In 2023, the team responded to 790 wildlife jams (areas of traffic congestion resulting from visitors stopping to view wildlife) for a diversity of species ranging from black and grizzly bears to moose, elk, river otters, etc. In addition to facilitating

safe wildlife viewing, Wildlife Brigade staff patrol developed areas to secure unattended bear attractants (e.g., food, coolers, etc.), educate visitors on how to stay safe in bear country, and partner with other agencies to host community events. The team also staffs a bear education trailer in the park to talk about bear ecology and safety while demonstrating the use of bear spray.

Visitor use patterns and bear distributions have changed dramatically since the Wildlife Brigade formed 17 years ago. In 2007, it was rare to see a grizzly bear in the southern half of the park. Today, grizzly bears frequent all corners of Grand Teton, and there are more wildlife watchers hoping to catch a glimpse. The Wildlife Brigade continues to adapt by piloting new strategies, such as dedicated no-stopping zones and new communication tools, while also increasing staff training and capacity.

Grand Teton has also been an active member of Bear Wise Jackson Hole (BWJH). Established in 2006, BWJH is a partnership between the Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Bridger-Teton National Forest, Grand Teton National Park, Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Teton County, and Town of Jackson. BWJH aims to ‘keep bears wild and people safe’ by minimizing the accessibility of unnatural attractants to bears and educating local residents and visitors about human-bear conflict prevention in Teton County.

*“Visitors travel from around the world to observe Grand Teton’s wildlife. We want people to see bears in this spectacular place. However, each of us plays a role to ensure our actions don’t negatively impact the very animals we come to see.”*

-Justin Schwabedissen  
Grand Teton Bear Biologist

Through BWJH, the park supported amendments to wildlife feeding prohibitions and bear-resistant infrastructure requirements within Teton County land development regulations and Town of Jackson ordinances. As of July 2022, all trash containers and dumpsters in Teton County (outside of the Town of Jackson) are required to be bear resistant based on Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) standards. Within the

Town of Jackson, bear-resistant trash cans are required within designated bear conflict zones effective April 1, 2023. Learn more about the updated regulations at [jhwildlife.org/bearwise-jh](http://jhwildlife.org/bearwise-jh). BWJH has also enhanced community outreach endeavors and, in 2023, reached over 35,000 residents through community outreach events, bulk information mailers, trash can violation notices, and other tools. Teton County residents have made great strides to secure attractants. BWJH and Grand Teton thank the community for their continued efforts.

Beyond the Wildlife Brigade and BWJH, Grand Teton collaborates on numerous other projects related to bear conservation in the GYE, including active membership in the IGBTST and the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee of the IGBC. The park also works with media organizations from around the world to help communicate important information about bear ecology, the human-bear interface, and safety in bear country.



### Ecosystem Threat Response & Monitoring

Grand Teton has taken several proactive measures to identify and manage potential threats to the park's natural resources.

The severe 2022-2023 winter combined with an emerging wildlife disease, mycoplasma bovis, led to a significant die-off of pronghorn on their winter ranges south of the park. By mid-May, starvation and pneumonia had killed thousands. A segment

of this wintering population summers in Grand Teton. Given the high level of overwinter mortality, biologists anxiously awaited the spring migration to confirm the toll on pronghorn summering in

*"Pronghorn have endured severe winters before, and the population has rebounded. It's really good news that some of the pronghorn made it back and that we have seen some signs of reproduction."*

-Sarah Dewey  
Grand Teton Wildlife Biologist

gave these animals a good opportunity to put on weight. If the fawns survive, it will be another generation that makes the migration, and begins to rebuild the population.

The park developed and implemented an invasive mountain goat rapid response plan, implementing year three of eradication efforts in the park, lethally removing 15 non-native mountain goats through aerial operations. Mountain goats threaten the native Teton Range bighorn sheep through increased risk of disease transmission and potential for competition. Mountain goats are not native to Grand Teton, having likely dispersed from a population introduced to the Snake River Range in Idaho more than 45 years ago.

Trumpeter swans at Swan Lake in Grand Teton successfully raised two cygnets in 2023. For the third year in a row, this was the only swan territory in the park to fledge young. The Swan Lake territory has been occupied almost every year since 1981 but has fledged cygnets only nine times, including six of the last eight years. The breeding population of trumpeter swans in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is relatively small but stable. Over the past ten years, there have been one to three nesting pairs in the park with large variability in nesting success and productivity. Nesting swans are sensitive to human disturbance, and some historic territories are no longer suitable.



The Monitoring Avian Productivity & Survivorship (MAPS) program has been tracking songbird populations across North America for over 30 years, collecting information on bird productivity, recruitment, and survival. Teton Science Schools (TSS) MAPS banding station in Grand Teton is one of the 10 longest-running stations in the nation, and 2023 marked the 32nd year of operation. A team of banders apply aluminum bands to birds' legs with unique identification numbers for tracking while recording data such as species, measurements, weight, and condition. The project is made possible through the support of Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation, Grand Teton National Park Foundation, and TSS.



To monitor Snake River fine-spotted cutthroat trout, Grand Teton park fisheries staff set up an underwater camera that uses motion-sensing technology to count fish as they enter and exit their spawning grounds. The data collected through this process helps the park gain insight into the health of the cutthroat fishery over time. The weir and underwater camera rig used to collect this data are funded by Grand Teton National Park Foundation in a joint initiative to restore and conserve native fish habitat.



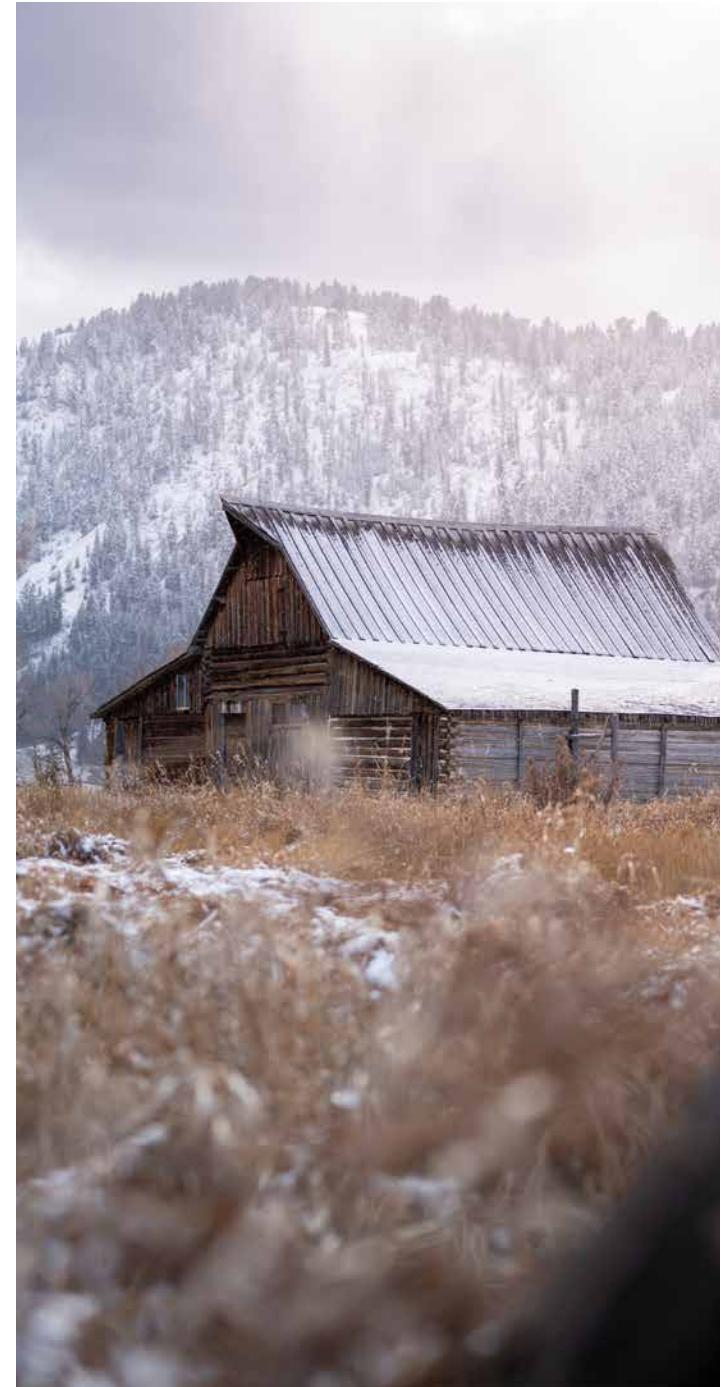
Grand Teton completed helicopter capture operations in January 2023, deploying radio collars on nine wolves (in four packs) and six coyotes. Wolf collars provide movement and location data, monitoring of pack and population sizes, calculate pack home ranges, locate and protect den sites, investigate predation patterns, and determine causes of mortality to support the park's ongoing wolf research and monitoring program which contributes to wolf conservation across its range. The six coyotes were collared for a study in partnership with the University of Wyoming (UW). Four graduate-level projects were completed about 20 years ago in and around Grand Teton to examine different aspects of coyote ecology prior to wolf recovery. The park and UW are now seeking to investigate the effects of wolf restoration on other canids to evaluate how wolves impact coyote ecology.

In addition to these monitoring efforts, Grand Teton National Park Science and Resource Management staff also completed 4 ungulate surveys; counted 83 male sage-grouse on park lek sites; monitored 13 occupied bald eagle territories, 4 occupied peregrine falcon territories, and 4 occupied trumpeter swan territories; monitored 12 air quality parameters; monitored 22 water quality sites; helped manage 55.8 miles of Wild and Scenic river; and monitored 7 of the 10 named glaciers in the park; and spent over 154 days on travel in the park's backcountry.

Additionally, park resource managers displayed 332 museum objects at 2 park visitor centers; issued 70 research permits, including 25 for wildlife, 23 vegetation, 9 social science, and 3 physical science; worked on 9 park cultural resource fieldwork projects; processed 9 new resource records; contracted 5 new cultural fieldwork projects; contracted 12 cultural inventory and research reports; worked with 8 companies with cultural resource contracts; streamlined 42 undertakings reviewed for State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) annual report; and participated in 11 SHPO consultations outside of inventory reports.

The park consulted on projects and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) effects with 24 tribes and engaged with 300 fourth and fifth grade tribal students on cultural resource education programs.

More information about resource stewardship efforts in Grand Teton can be found on the park's website in the *Grand Teton National Park & John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, Natural and Cultural Resources Report Vital Signs*.





### Kelly Parcel

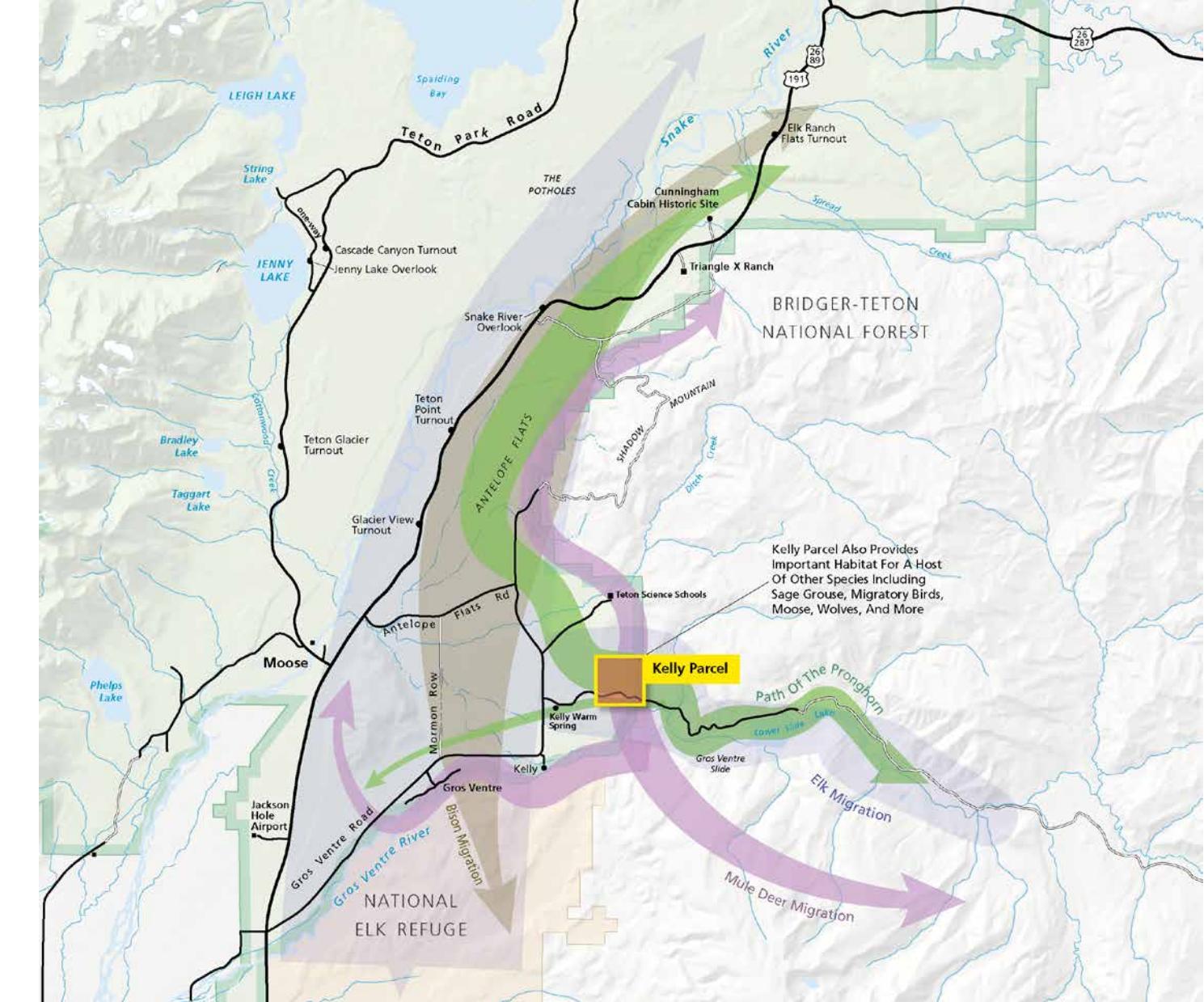
The inclusion of a 640-acre state inholding known as the “Kelly Parcel” in Grand Teton National Park has been and remains a high priority for the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior.

Preserving the parcel would protect in perpetuity a major artery for wildlife movements and habitat



connectivity for the region’s iconic ungulate populations. The parcel is the starting point for the Path of the Pronghorn and is a critical link to mule deer migration corridors that stretch to public, private, and tribal lands hundreds of miles away. A recent appraisal conducted by a private appraiser in coordination with the Department of the Interior and the State of Wyoming valued the parcel at \$62.4 million.

During a public comment process in Fall 2023 conducted by the State to consider potentially selling the parcel to the highest bidder at public auction, Wyomingites uniformly said in four public meetings around the state and in more than 9,000 written comments that the State should instead sell the parcel directly to the park to protect it, as was done with the three other state inholdings in the park.



The Department of the Interior, the National Park Service, the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, and local leaders continue to engage

Wyoming state leaders to explore how the parcel could be preserved as part of the park for future generations to enjoy.



# EXCEPTIONAL VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Grand Teton National Park welcomes over three million visitors annually, drawing individuals from across the country and various corners of the globe. Park staff work to provide lasting and meaningful experiences for visitors, generation after generation. Collaboration with local and state nonprofit partners, tourism bureaus, and stakeholders is integral to maintaining a sustainable ecosystem and destination. Through these partnerships, Grand Teton strives to offer millions of visitors a quality experience, whether they engage in recreational activities such as hiking, camping, fishing, wildlife viewing, or simply taking in the stunning scenery the park offers. Visitors can trust the commitment of Grand Teton's staff and partners to ensure memorable experiences that will last a lifetime.

## Inspiring the Next Generation of Park Stewards

Funded by Grand Teton National Park Foundation (GTNPF) and in partnership with Teton Science Schools, Grand Teton Association (GTA), the American Conservation Experience, and many others, the park hosted a variety of programs, including NPS Academy, Pura Vida, Rising Educators, the Youth Conservation Program, Indigenous Ground Leaders, and Mountains to Main Street ambassador programs. These programs help expose youth to conservation careers and develop a workforce that better reflects the rich mosaic of the American public and recruits, engages, and trains diverse young people to lead our parks in the years ahead.

In partnership with GTNPF, the park has launched multiple, multi-year projects to preserve cultural resources and improve the visitor experience at key locations in the park. These projects, funded by the Foundation, include Mormon Row preservation and renewal, Snake River access improvements, Teton Crest Trail renewal, and the upcoming Reimagining Taggart Lake trail campaign.

At Mormon Row, work included restoration of the historic Roy Chambers Homestead to transform unused structures into employee housing. Initiated in 2023, the first phase of this project involved reconstructing the buildings with new foundations. In 2024, the project will include exterior preservation, interior upgrades, and site enhancements. This effort is part of a preservation effort that aims to safeguard the entire Mormon



Row Historic District, which provides a glimpse into the park's history and the challenges of historic settlement in Jackson Hole, with the scenic backdrop of the Tetons.

New in 2023, history is coming to life at Mormon Row, fueled by the passion of 56 volunteers.

During the 2020 pandemic, the historic structures of Menor's Ferry were closed to the public. Historic interpreters reached out to the park determined to see this place reopened. Exhibits were revamped and volunteers were prepped with period specific clothing, games, and crafts. Bringing a breadth of their own experiences, they impress upon visitors the challenges people faced homesteading in the Jackson Hole Valley. Living history at Menor's Ferry and Mormon Row has been widely successful, and during the July 2023 pilot of the program, volunteers made over 13,000 visitor contacts.

In 2023, the park also continued work with GTA to provide a mobile bookstore in the area to further share the story of Mormon Row.

*"A lot of people who go out to Mormon Row are out there for one thing—a photo. Through chats, games, dressing up, and more...living history has turned this place into a 'stop' rather than just a drive by. Kids are spending hours having fun there...doing LAUNDRY."*

*-Lee Rademaker*  
Grand Teton's Moose District Interpreter



### **Snake River Gateways**

Phase 3 of the Snake Rivers Gateways Project began with construction at Moose Landing in Grand Teton, which will improve boat launching conditions along the Snake River. Features will include a boat ramp that will accommodate two vehicles at a time, fully accessible sidewalks leading to two ADA (Americans with Disability Act) accessible fishing platforms, expanded parking, and improved site amenities including picnic tables, bench seating, bicycle parking, and interactive educational displays. The entire Snake River Gateways Project is expected to be completed by fall of 2024. The project improvements include enhancing access points along the river at Moose Landing, Pacific Creek Landing (completed in 2021) and enhancements at Jackson Lake Dam (completed in 2022).



### **Teton Crest Trail**

Teton Crest Trail renewal entered its fourth year. Project work is occurring at the top of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, Marion Lake, Static Peak Divide, Hurricane Pass, South Fork of Cascade Canyon, North Fork of Cascade Canyon, and Paintbrush Divide. Trail crews have been hard at work removing large boulders that have rolled into the trail and building stairs and stone walls to ensure hikers may enjoy the Teton backcountry for generations to come. The Teton Crest Trail is a 45-mile ridgeline traverse that leads hikers through the alpine wilderness of the Teton Range. The trail is one of the most picturesque destinations within the National Park Service. Sections of it were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps dating back to the 1930s, and, in some cases, have persisted largely untouched for over 80 years, until now.



### **Taggart Lake Improvements**

The Taggart Lake Trailhead, a popular year-round destination, offers diverse experiences with a trail system leading to picturesque lakes at the base of the Tetons. It serves as a starting point for a variety of activities like hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing. Opportunities for arduous and extreme recreational experiences in the Teton Range are also available from this trailhead, while terrain closer to the parking area lends itself to more family-friendly excursions.

The trailhead infrastructure and trail system were not constructed to handle current levels of year-round visitation and do not provide the orientation and wayfinding essential to first time visitors. Barriers also exist for users with disabilities. The volume of visitors overwhelm existing trailhead

facilities resulting in degraded facilities, vegetation loss, soil compaction, and overflow parking. While crowds tend to disperse after leaving the trailhead, environmental impacts are evident with trail erosion, vegetation loss, and damage to riparian areas. The Cottonwood Creek Picnic Area, adjacent to the trailhead, faces similar challenges. In collaboration with Grand Teton National Park Foundation (GTNPF), the park aims to enhance visitor experiences by addressing these issues. Key objectives include minimizing resource impacts, improving accessibility, and creating high-quality hiking and family-friendly experiences. In 2023, the park and GTNPF developed preliminary planning and design concepts in concert with visitor use and experience management objectives to preserve the park's natural beauty and ensure visitors have a memorable experience.



### Moose-Wilson Road

Major park infrastructure improvements were made in 2023 and included Great American Outdoor Act (GAOA) funded projects, including the continuation of Phase 1 of the Moose-Wilson Road Construction Project. In August 2023, National Park Service Director Chuck Sams visited Grand Teton and spoke about the positive impact the GAOA has had throughout the National Park System, including on the Moose-Wilson Corridor.

During the spring and summer of 2023,

*"Grand Teton National Park holds a very special place in my heart. We're going to have a real trailhead at Granite Canyon. We're going to have a place where it is clear for people to be able to park year round."*

-Charles F. "Chuck" Sams III  
National Park Service Director

in Grand Teton National Park. Improvements to the trailhead include an expanded parking lot that accommodates more vehicles and more visitors to the trailhead. The old parking lot, with undefined

construction crews completed the road base and installed asphalt between the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve and Granite Canyon Entrance Station.

The newly improved Granite Canyon Trailhead was completed in the fall 2023, and now provides a better visitor experience for those planning to hike, ski, or take in the magnificent scenery that the Moose-Wilson Corridor offers

and unstriped gravel, was small and cramped and only provided parking for 8-10 vehicles. The new lot provides easy driving access and plenty of room to maneuver a vehicle, with parking for 32 vehicles and an additional 2 barrier-free spaces. New sidewalks improve accessibility in the area. New trailhead amenities include vault toilets, a bike rack, bench, and an information kiosk. New signage improves wayfinding along the roadway and new removable bollards and snow poles help improve visitor safety and snowplow operations. Poker Flats also opened in the fall for equestrian use, with an accessible horse mounting area and redesigned trail system.

Crews re-used native boulders on the landscape, conserved topsoil, placing it in disturbed areas, and reseeded the topsoil with native seed. Supplemental

planting improvements are planned for Fall 2024. "The Great American Outdoors Act has made a tangible difference here in Grand Teton National Park by helping us improve access, fix safety problems, while maintaining the rural quality of this driving experience," said Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Chip Jenkins.

Granite Canyon Entrance Station construction will be completed in 2024, with improved entrance and exit lanes and construction of a bicycle connection to the Teton County pathway.

Phase II of Moose-Wilson Road Construction will begin once funding is secured and will include redesign of the Death Canyon access road and trailhead parking, enhancement of a new intersection and bicycle transition, and native landscaping on the former roadway.





### Colter Bay Legacy

The National Park Service (NPS) is at the beginning of a master planning effort to reestablish Colter Bay as a key destination and central location for park visitors to stay, play and learn in Grand Teton National Park.

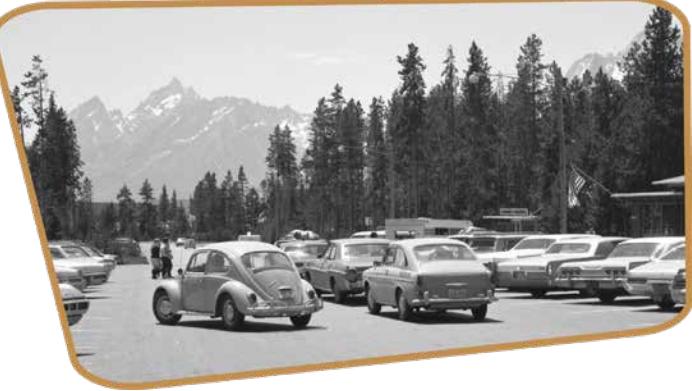
The current layout of Colter Bay was designed around the needs of overnight visitors in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Changing visitation, changing visitor and employee needs, and aging infrastructure highlight an opportunity to plan for the next generation of Colter Bay, continuing its legacy in Grand Teton National Park.

The Colter Bay Legacy planning effort kicked off in late 2022 with internal scoping with park leadership and subject matter experts. Project scope, purpose and need, as well as project objectives, and

preliminary desired conditions were developed. We also identified potential impacts.

Grand Teton hosted two opportunities for tribes to engage with the project in 2023, including an April 20th virtual meeting prior to concept development and two in-person listening sessions on Oct. 2 and 6 for the NPS to hear from tribes. Tribes were also invited to comment through civic engagement.

As part of the early planning process, the park extended an invitation to the indigenous community to articulate the significance of the areas surrounding Colter Bay. The goal was to explore potential redevelopment of the space that aligns with visitor needs while safeguarding key locations important to tribes. Discussions were also conducted regarding the establishment of areas dedicated to tribal nations' traditional



practices, ensuring people feel welcomed back to their homelands for generations to come.

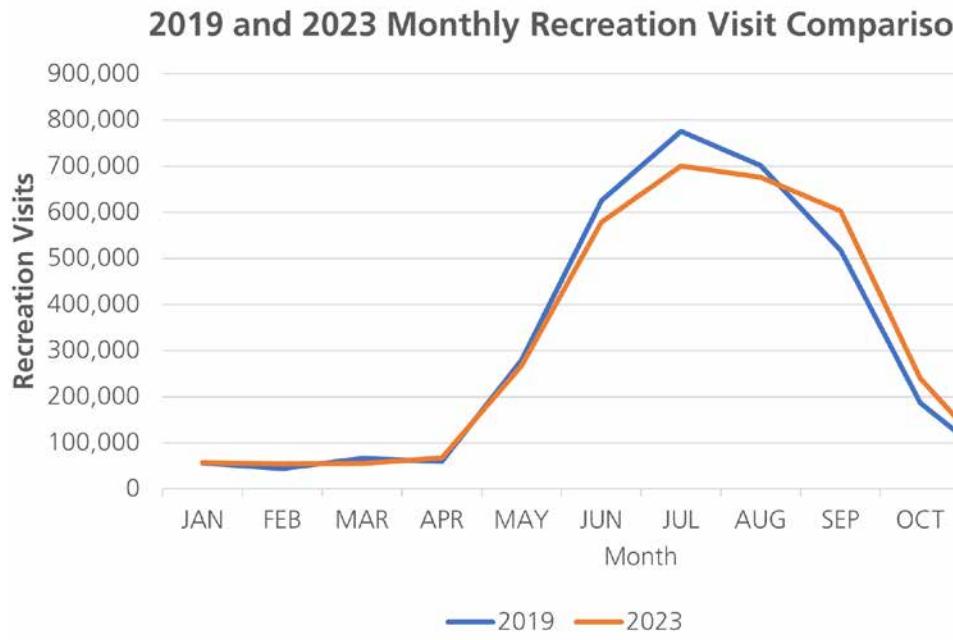
In August 2023, an intensive three-day concept development charrette was held at Colter Bay with the purpose of generating a range of high-level concepts focused on the core area of Colter Bay. Approximately 28 people intermittently participated including Grand Teton's senior leadership team, park interdisciplinary team, contractor design team, and Grand Teton National Park Foundation. Many participants camped at the group campground and invited Colter Bay employees and residents to a campfire discussion about the project. During the charrette, the group reviewed information gathered over the last year, discussed desired visitor use and experience specific to Colter Bay, and then developed concept themes and design parameters. Working in small groups, each team designed a potential concept for Colter Bay based on their assigned theme and design parameters. The charrette resulted in six high-level concepts the park later used to engage the public in the fall.

In September, rack cards and flyers were posted around Colter Bay and other areas in Grand Teton with a link that allowed visitors to sign up for notification about the upcoming planning effort. Civic engagement materials, a news release, and communication plan were also developed.

Pre-NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) civic engagement was open for 60 days, from Nov. 13 to Jan. 11, 2024. The focus of engagement was on the core area of Colter Bay, using the six high-level concepts. The park held a virtual public meeting to discuss the future of Colter Bay and how the public could get involved by submitting their comments on the NPS' Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website. During this period, the park received 253 individual correspondences which resulted in about 700 individual comments. The park will use this feedback to develop preliminary alternatives for the Colter Bay Legacy planning effort, and will engage with the public again.

Other work included planning for environmental change by developing climate projections for Jackson Lake and gathering data on social trails and vehicle turning movements within Colter Bay.





### Preserving the Visitor Experience

Grand Teton National Park is the place people visit for stunning mountains, discovering wildlife and wild places, and to have a life-changing adventure. A place with easy access from the moment they arrive to a picture-perfect view while driving, hiking, biking, or touching down on a runway in a sagebrush sea. A park that more people are discovering than ever before.

### Increasing & Changing Visitation Trends

Grand Teton National Park hosted 3,417,106 recreation visits in 2023, a 22% increase from 2022. In recent years, Grand Teton has experienced changing visitation trends. Recreation visits in 2023 are most similar to the number of visits in 2019. While 2019 and 2023 had similar overall numbers in visitation, how that visitation occurred throughout the year was different. In 2019, Grand



Teton had higher levels of visitation in the summer, with peak months being June, July, and August; while in 2023 the peak months shifted later in the year to July, August, and September (see graph above). Learn more about visitation statistics in Grand Teton and other National Park Service sites at [irma.nps.gov/STATS/](http://irma.nps.gov/STATS/).

In summer 2023, park staff conducted broader civic engagement to ask the general public for their input on how they visit the park and what their experiences have been. The park received 446 comments from 45 different states and 4 different countries. Important experiences in the park were varied, from recreation to nature experiences. Some important experiences mentioned many times by commenters were similar to what respondents of the socioeconomic study reported and included: wildlife viewing, hiking, the peace and quiet of the park, scenic views

including the mountain range itself, and solitude. When prompted about any challenging parts of visiting Grand Teton, some points mentioned by commenters included: finding lodging that is not too expensive, the park was too crowded, long lines at entrance stations, not enough parking at trailheads and in the park in general. Park staff will reach out to the public again this summer regarding desired future conditions for visitor use and experience at the park.

### Visitor Use Management Process

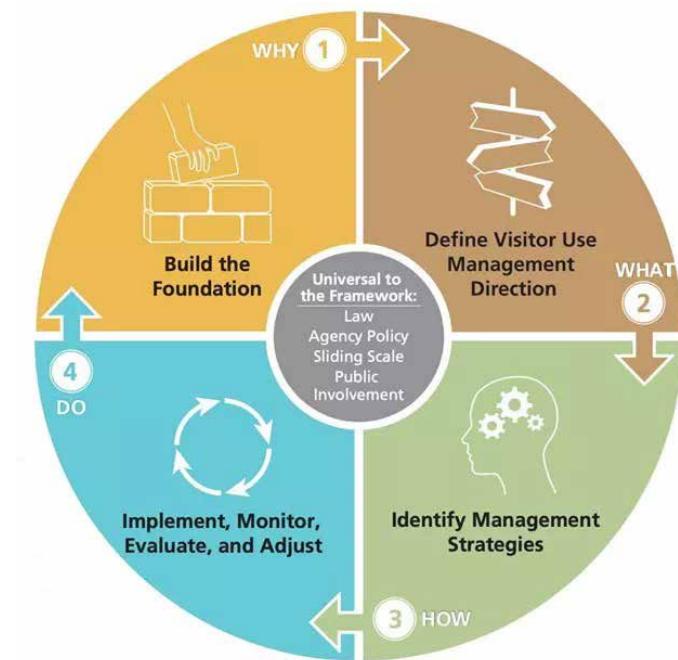
Visitor use management is a proactive and adaptive process to maintain desired conditions and visitor experiences in the park. It can include managing various visitor use characteristics, like the type, timing, amount, and distribution of visitation, so that the National Park Service mission can be achieved. Visitor use management

helps ensure the park's fundamental resources—scenery, wildlife, historic and prehistoric features, mountains, plants, lakes, and streams—are protected, all while providing opportunities for outstanding visitor experiences.

Visitor use management at Grand Teton is an ongoing process. Throughout the park's history, various initiatives, plans, and developments have changed the course of visitor use management.

Today, park managers are looking to organize previous visitor use management guidance, learn about the quality of visitors' experiences, and strategically meet parkwide management needs.

This very specific management process at Grand Teton follows guidance from the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council's framework, seen below. Learn more at [go.nps.gov/tetonVUE](http://go.nps.gov/tetonVUE).



## Socioeconomic Research of Grand Teton

This study, part of the National Park Service Social Science Program's national effort, aims to support parks in understanding and monitoring socioeconomic factors, with the specific purpose of developing a current and deeper understanding of who visits Grand Teton and what they do during their visit.

### Key Takeaways

- Grand Teton is America's park, with visitors from nearly all 50 states. Only 5% of visitors are permanent residents of the local area.
- Most visitors (61%) planned to spend more than one day in Grand Teton.
- 2% of visitors arrive to the park via bicycle, while 0.5% arrive via e-bike.
- Nearly all visitors reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc., (98%) as an activity they participated in during their visit, while a majority reported viewing wildlife (87%), driving for pleasure and hiking (66%). 8% reported viewing grizzly bear #399.
- Almost half of respondents (49%) reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc., as their primary activity, followed by hiking (21%).
- Most important reasons for their visit to Grand Teton included viewing wildlife and natural scenery (52%) and spending time with family and friends (26%).
- 43% of respondents stated that they somewhat or strongly agreed that Grand Teton is too crowded.



As part of ongoing monitoring in the park, data was collected from eight trail counters at key summer destinations, which cumulatively showed an estimated 34% increase in trail use over the last 10 years. This increase indicates a higher proportion of visitors using the park's trail system.



## Parkwide Accessibility

Grand Teton has implemented an accessibility plan to better allow for visitors of all abilities to enjoy the park in meaningful ways. The park's accessibility team began a trail accessibility pilot with partners Teton Adaptive Sports and Grand Teton National Park Foundation. The goal is to develop a scalable process to collect trail information related to access, make recommendations

to improve access through specific trail maintenance, create trailhead signage with

Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) required information (potentially enhance it with maps and pictures to describe trail conditions for visitors and incorporate accessible trail data into the park website, NPS App, and trail guides). During summer 2023, the team demoed a trail accessibility measuring device known as a HETAP that helps measure grade, cross-slope, and more. The team also tried out an all-terrain wheelchair and witnessed the obstacles an assistive device can and what it can't maneuver around. This is a long-term project the park is embarking on to provide improvements to trail accessibility.

## "Go Before You Go" Campaign

Grand Teton is piloting the "Go Before You Go" campaign in the park in order to help avoid human waste at popular day hiking locations. Signs were deployed on the ground at key locations in the park. Additionally, Grand Teton Association began offering human waste

disposal bags at store locations inside park visitor centers. The park aims to educate backcountry campers on how to properly dispose of their waste, by providing human waste disposal bags and information on how to dig and use cat holes.

The "Go Before You Go" campaign has also been featured in the park newspaper and on park social media channels.

*"Accessible trails are good trail designs for everybody. They require less maintenance, are more sustainable, and protect natural resources because they encourage people to stay on the trail. It's a win-win-win for trail improvements."*

*-David Reus*  
Grand Teton Facility Management Systems Specialist & Accessibility Team Lead



## Dark Skies

Grand Teton National Park's dark skies draw visitors from around the world to experience brilliant stars, the Milky Way, celestial events, and, on occasion, the northern lights. However, dark skies are a vanishing natural resource in our world. One third of the population can no longer see the richness of the night sky due to light pollution created from human infrastructure.

Dark night skies are essential to the rhythms of life on Earth, understanding that almost all living things thrive

*"The darkness and clearness of the sky in a place like this is an important and valuable resource that we need to protect. We don't often think about it, but we're really losing something of our heritage when we don't have darkness anymore."*

-Robert "Bob" C. Hoyle  
Grand Teton Interpretive Park Ranger,  
& Professor of Physics and Astronomy

insight into visitor perceptions of lighting and visitors' preferences for different lighting hues

on cycles of light and dark. With simple steps to adjust lighting in our homes and communities, we can begin to restore darkness into the skies above.

Grand Teton strives to preserve the park's natural nightscape so future generations can continue to experience the wonderment of the night sky.

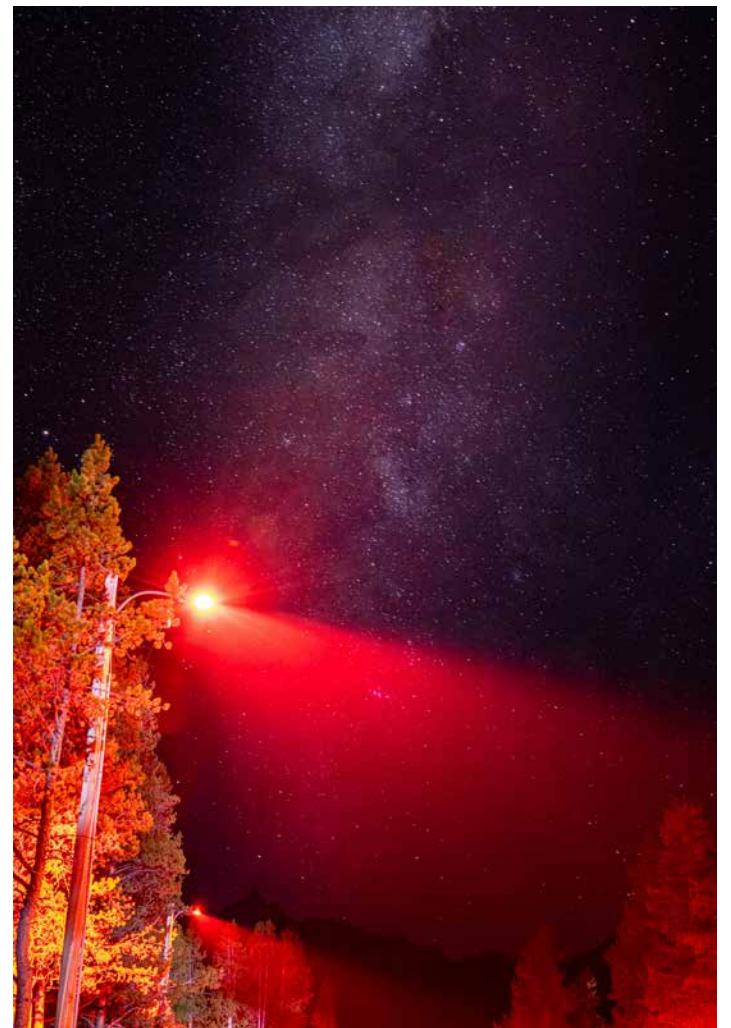
During the 2023 summer, the park's social science team expanded upon previous dark sky research by gaining

and intensities at Colter Bay in Grand Teton National Park. Visitors to Colter Bay were surveyed at night and asked to choose their preferred color. Options included white, amber, amber mixed with white, and red, as well as 10 options of intensities from dim to bright from a specialized light specifically crafted for the study.

Most respondents stated that night sky viewing and having a pristine night sky are important to them and an important part of their Grand Teton experience, but few know what to expect in terms of dark skies at the park. The lowest intensity lighting condition (ie, the dimmest setting) was the most preferred intensity across all hues, making up 86% of the responses. Low intensity red light was the most preferred condition. Justifications for these preferences



mainly were subcategorized (in order of popularity) as "good for night vision and easy eye adjustment", "good brightness/not too bright", "good for wildlife and the surrounding night environment", and "good for nighttime functioning". Respondents were also asked about support for different management actions and found that "setting lights to minimum brightness" was the most supported option (91%).





# MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

For well over a century, parks and philanthropy have been intertwined, fueling conservation and preservation efforts for our nation's most treasured places.

In this spirit of collaboration, partnerships have emerged as key to unlocking the full potential of parks and getting things done both within and beyond park boundaries.

At Grand Teton National Park, we feel honored to have forged many meaningful partnerships with organizations and individuals who share our commitment to preserving this special place for generations to come and inspiring park stewardship. Our joint efforts serve as a testament to the incredible things we can accomplish when we engage with each other and work together.



## Grand Teton National Park Foundation

Grand Teton National Park Foundation (GTNPF) partners with Grand Teton National Park to steward, protect,

and enhance all that is special in the park. The Foundation initiates improvements, critical research, and projects that improve visitors' experiences, creating a solid future for Grand Teton. Since 1997, GTNPF has raised over \$115 million for youth education initiatives, cultural resource preservation, wildlife and natural resource conservation, and capital projects such as construction of the Craig Thomas Discovery & Visitor Center; a \$23 million campaign to preserve the 640-acre Antelope Flats parcel; the Jenny Lake Renewal Project; the purchase of the last

privately-held acre on the Mormon Row Historic District; and the Snake River access improvement project. Learn more at [gtnpf.org](http://gtnpf.org).



## Grand Teton Association

The Grand Teton Association (GTA) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1937 that has long been an important bridge between visitors and their experience in Grand Teton National Park. GTA inspires

deeper connection, better understanding, and enduring support for Grand Teton National Park, Bridger-Teton National Forest, and the National Elk Refuge. Through the operation of stores, membership dues, and other activities, GTA provides aid to help fund interpretive, educational, and scientific projects in the park and nearby communities. GTA operates park shops located at the Craig Thomas Discovery & Visitor Center, Jenny Lake Visitor Center, Colter Bay Visitor Center, Jackson Hole Airport, National Elk Refuge and Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center, and at [grandtetonassociation.org](http://grandtetonassociation.org).



## University of Wyoming AMK Research Station

The University of Wyoming-National Park Service (UW-NPS) Research Station is a cooperative effort between the

University of Wyoming and the National Park Service, one of only nine field stations in U.S. national parks and by far the oldest partnership of this kind. UW students and faculty partner with the National Park Service and others to

increase opportunities for research, scholarship, creative and cultural activities, courses connected to Wyoming's iconic landscapes and ecosystems, its Native American culture and heritage, and its traditions from ranching to recreation. Learn more at [uwnpns.org](http://uwnpns.org).



## Teton Science Schools

Teton Science Schools (TSS) is a nonprofit educational organization with headquarters

in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. TSS operates in partnership with Grand Teton National Park and as a permittee of the Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee national forests. The TSS mission is to inspire curiosity, engagement, and leadership through transformative place-based education. For nearly 15,000 learners per year, the place-based approach increases engagement, learning, and community impact. Located on four campuses in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and Teton Valley, Idaho, their programs include one independent school serving students pre-K through 12th grade, field education for schools and visitors from around the world, and educator development. Learn more at [tetonscience.org](http://tetonscience.org).





## Tribal Engagement

The history of Grand Teton National Park is only a small fraction of the larger human history of people living on and using this landscape for over 11,000 years. The park and parkway are the ancestral homelands of 24 associated tribes, and as many as 50 tribes have ancestral connections to this land, which has historical, cultural, and spiritual meanings. Tribes are contemporary and have rich, vibrant, and active communities and cultures. Recognizing the invaluable contributions of tribal communities to the rich tapestry of Grand Teton, this report aims to shed light on the ongoing efforts made by the park to foster meaningful relationships, enhance understanding, and actively engage with tribes. The park aspires to create a collaborative and inclusive approach that honors the diverse perspectives and priorities of tribal nations.



## Indigenous Arts & Cultural Demonstration

After 45 years of hosting artists in Colter Bay as part of the American Indian Guest Artist Program in Grand Teton, the park heard from some of our associated tribal nations that it was time to give that good work a refresh. After the 2023 season, the interpretive team took a critical look at the goals, intentions, application process, transparency of how artists are selected to participate, and created space for additional artists to share their art and culture for the upcoming seasons. Participating artists will continue to demonstrate and share the cultural traditions of their tribes through art forms such as painting, weaving, pottery, beadwork, musical instruments, and more. The biggest change is that artists will be compensated for their time, travel, and participation, in addition to offering their finished items for purchase.



The 2023 program hosted several artists over a 20-week period during the summer season, with artists also offering interpretive evening programming and performances at the Colter Bay Amphitheater for the second year.

## Jackson Hole InterTribal Gathering

In October of 2023, the park joined with other state and federal agencies, non-profits, and 13 of our associated nations in the first ever Jackson Hole InterTribal Gathering, sharing and amplifying indigenous knowledge, wisdom, and voices in federal land management of the Southern Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. For three days, members of park leadership had the opportunity to meet and discuss priority issues and concerns with tribal leadership. This time is leading to stronger and more

consistent communication and relationship building with associated nations.

Thank you for the generosity of our tribal partners for sharing their experience and to the organizers of the inaugural gathering, for providing the space for us to listen.

As part of the InterTribal Gathering, visitors and residents of Jackson Hole were invited to enjoy a public art demonstration *Rematriate Performance and Lighting of the Teepees*, which serves as a visual reminder to the wisdom of unity and recognizes the indigenous peoples who have walked the region's lands and waterways since time immemorial.



### Colter Bay Listening Sessions

Grand Teton hosted two listening sessions with interested tribal members about the future of Colter Bay. In advance of any formal National

Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, the park invited the indigenous community to share the importance of the spaces around Colter Bay and how the park could redevelop the area to meet visitor needs, while also protecting important places. Conversations also took place about creating space that tribal nations could use for their traditional practices, ensuring people feel welcomed back to their homelands for generations to come.

### Tribal Youth & Community Engagement

The park offers a week-long career exploration program, Indigenous Ground Leaders. In 2023, Indigenous Youth Voices and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Youth Employment Program brought groups of youth to connect with their ancestral lands and explore conservation careers. They explored botanical and cultural resources, learned from elders, and participated in job shadowing in different career paths.

The park and Grand Teton National Park Foundation are partnering with Ancestral Land Conservation Corps to stand up a local office on the Wind River Reservation to recruit indigenous youth to participate in public land projects, promoting stewardship, connection to homelands, and exposure to potential career paths.

Since 2016, Grand Teton Lodge Company and the park have hosted an Every Kid Outdoors program, bringing elementary school students from Blackfoot, ID, including Shoshone-Bannock students from the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, to the park for three days. Over 60 children and 40 parents and teachers enjoyed the opportunity to come to the park, many for their first time.

### Tribal Community Engagement

In 2023, Grand Teton hired a tribal relationships liaison and a tribal engagement fellow to work with tribal elders and educators, further personal relationships, and better engage with tribal members about resources and opportunities available in the National Park Service.

### Wyoming Wildlife Migration

The park continues to work collaboratively with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and many other partners to protect migration and winter habitat for long-term, sustainable elk, deer, and pronghorn populations, working with tribes to support the interconnected goals we have of maintaining ungulates on the landscape.



### Red Shawl Day

November 19 is Red Shawl Day, a time for reflection about the acts of violence committed against indigenous peoples, who are missing and murdered. For the third year, the park wrapped the entrance sign in a red shawl and displayed a temporary sign to bring awareness to park visitors.

### Tribes with Ancestral & Cultural Connection to Grand Teton National Park

- *Apache Tribe of Oklahoma*
- *Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Montana*
- *Blackfeet Tribe of Montana*
- *Burns Paiute*
- *Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Oklahoma*
- *Coeur D'Alene Tribe*
- *Comanche Nation, Oklahoma*
- *Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation*
- *Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation*
- *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*
- *Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation*
- *Crow Tribe of Montana*
- *Eastern Shoshone Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming*
- *Gros Ventre & Assiniboine Tribes of the Fort Belknap Reservation of Montana*
- *Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma*
- *Kootenai Tribe of Idaho*
- *Nez Perce Tribe*
- *Northern Arapaho Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming*
- *Northern Cheyenne Tribe*
- *Oglala Sioux Tribe*
- *Rosebud Sioux Tribe of the Rosebud Indian Reservation, South Dakota*
- *Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation*
- *Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North & South Dakota*
- *Yankton Sioux Tribe of South Dakota*



# THRIVING WORKFORCE

Grand Teton is more than just an awe-inspiring landscape; it's a community of dedicated professionals committed to safeguarding and celebrating this extraordinary place and its people. Park leadership works tirelessly to support staff well-being through a number of avenues. Staff work to foster a culture of inclusivity and support where diversity is valued and embraced. This support also extends to park partners, recognizing that thriving in a dynamic environment such as Grand Teton requires exceptional collaboration and teamwork.

## Effective Supervision

Grand Teton continues to prioritize hiring, employee onboarding, and supervisor support as best practices to support park staff. The park also gives priority to supervisor hiring as positions

become vacant and enrolling all new supervisors in the National Park Service supervisory training program. Grand Teton continues to provide time, resources, and support for supervisors at all levels, implementing individual development plans to help them enhance their skills and refine their management styles. The park has also identified systems for peer and direct report feedback on supervisor performance.

## Workforce Housing

The park continues to identify and plan for increases in quality and inventory of park housing available for park employees. In 2021, Grand Teton conducted a thorough analysis of the park's organizational chart to evaluate employee housing needs. This analysis determined the park should plan for approximately 95% of employees needing

government housing and worked out to be a shortfall of about 35 beds, or the need to create 35 additional beds in the park.

Since then, Grand Teton has sought support from the National Park Service Washington Office and Grand Teton National Park Foundation (GTNPF) for funding to create more housing. This has resulted in six new houses being built in Moose. The contract has been awarded and construction of the units will begin spring 2024. In partnership with GTNPF, this has also resulted in four new seasonal beds in the Roy Chambers Homestead at Mormon Row. Construction for this began during summer 2023. The buildings at the homestead site were moved off their original foundations, new foundations were built, and the buildings were moved back, and onto their new foundations.

## Position Conversions & Commensurate Pay

With continued growth in longer primary visitor season and challenges in recruitment and employee retention, the park explored instances where organizational needs would be better met by having additional permanent staff, rather than relying on seasonal staff. Based on extensive analysis of workload and financial planning to assess the most effective course of action, in 2020, several interpretive park ranger positions were converted to permanent. In 2023, the park converted several custodial, fee collection, and law enforcement ranger positions to permanent as well.

Park leadership continues to pursue avenues to address employee commensurate pay concerns by working with the National Park Service's Regional and Washington offices to garner support for appropriate pay in a high-cost area.

## Leadership Advisory Council

The Leadership Advisory Council (LAC) was created to allow opportunities for all employee voices to be heard. The council is made up of employees from all park divisions who bring concerns and issues to park management. LAC has two subcommittees where specific issues involving employee wellness and inclusion are addressed.

## LAC Wellness

The wellness team worked with GTNPF to provide no-cost personal counseling services for park employees. The team also continued wellness initiatives including skin cancer screenings, Mental Health First Aid training, hearing tests, and more. The team was also involved in Grand Teton's first ever Pride Outside event at Jenny Lake.

## LAC Inclusion

The inclusion team held three employee input sessions with contractor Make it Plain and, together, implemented the RISE survey, reaching out to staff to learn about experiences related to inclusion in Grand Teton. RISE is a vision for a Respectful, Inclusive, Safe, an Engaged workforce in the National Park Service. The survey resulted in over 150 responses from park staff. Make it Plain will be compiling employee thoughts to share for future action that enhances workplace culture at Grand Teton.



## ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The Grand Teton National Park team seeks diverse skills and perspectives, expects accountability to the National Park Service mission, and promotes flexibility and creativity in maximizing the efficient use of human and financial resources. In 2023, the park took several measures to achieve high standards in organizational excellence.

### Strategic Planning

The park continued to integrate strategic planning into employee work plans in 2023, with regular updates through internal communication channels to keep employees in the loop about planning efforts. Park senior leadership team beta tested using Microsoft Planner for tracking of emphasis areas and key actions associated with strategic planning. Funding sources and

projects were also consolidated into the work planning efforts for efficiency and alignment.

### Business Management

In fiscal year 2023, the park achieved significant milestones in business management through strategic initiatives. The park's management team effectively communicated and operationalized the organizational chart in alignment with the five-year budget, fostering transparency and accountability. A thorough analysis was conducted to evaluate the feasibility of transitioning seasonal positions into career seasonal positions, aiming to enhance workforce sustainability. The team evaluated seasonal programs in order to determine the most effective mix of career-seasonal, seasonal, and contract positions and developed a new organizational chart with

sufficient funding. The park's business continuity plan was updated with a focus on ensuring a five-year viability, and ongoing efforts will be pursued to identify additional cost-saving measures as needed. Furthermore, an operations protocol was developed to facilitate adjustments within the organization, enhancing the park's adaptability to changing circumstances. These initiatives collectively underscore the park's commitment to efficient business management, financial sustainability, and organizational resilience.

### Modernize Fee Management Program

The park worked to modernize its fee management program to increase revenue and manage risks. An organizational review and evaluation of entrance pass usage were conducted, adapting to changing visitation. Boat and backcountry camping permits were transitioned to Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) for streamlined management. These efforts reflect the park's commitment to financial sustainability amid changing visitation patterns.

### Special Park Use Permit Program

Grand Teton has responded to and planned for increasing demand in special park use permits and impacts associated with changing visitation. The park continues to implement and adapt changes to its wedding and commitment ceremony permit structure, evaluating and updating standard operating procedures and park webpages to enhance accessibility and clarity of the application process. A comprehensive cost recovery analysis was also conducted, ensuring the program's financial sustainability.





### Improve Utility Infrastructure

Infrastructure improvements in the park included completion of parkwide telecommunications expansion and fiber optic connections at 4 Lazy F and the Moulton Cabins employee housing. Additionally, Grand Teton is exploring solutions to enhance water quality in the park. While park waters are protected, water quality is affected by numerous human and natural influences, including changing visitation, sewage treatment, and dated infrastructure and utility systems. Park waters can also be threatened by climate change, including changes in the hydrologic cycle resulting from less precipitation and snow and earlier snowmelt.

Over the past 10 years, Grand Teton has undertaken 24 water quality related projects at a cost of almost \$39 million. In 2023, construction of a new Great American Outdoors Act funded lift station at Colter Bay was completed to meet



current and future needs. Brand new vault toilets were installed as part of the Snake River Gateways Project at Pacific Creek Landing, Jackson Lake Dam, and Moose Landing. New vault toilets were also installed at Mormon Row, Catholic Bay, Signal Mountain, Two Oceans and Emma Matilda lakes, and at Granite Canyon Trailhead as part of the Moose-Wilson Road project. The environmental benefit from installing vault toilets is to prevent waste from seeping into the soil or nearby bodies of water. The underground vault or pit serves as a containment system, minimizing the risk of pollution and protecting the surrounding environment. Rehabilitation will be completed on historic restrooms at String Lake to provide more capacity. Water and wastewater treatment projects are also being conducted at Mormon Row, Jenny Lake Campground and Boat Launch, Signal Mountain, Moran, and Flagg Ranch.

### Operational Leadership

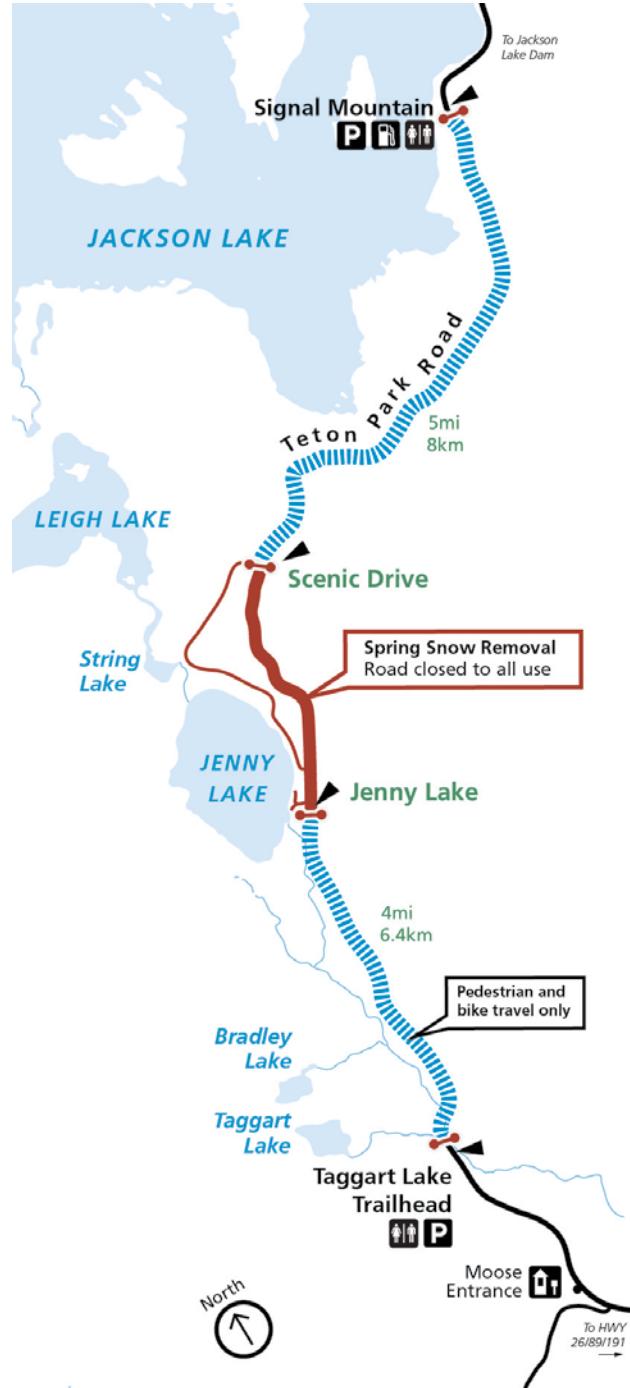
Operational Leadership (OL) is a risk management system with a behavioral component that allows National Park Service (NPS) employees to manage risk to levels that are As Low as Reasonably Practicable (ALRP), while also focusing on the cultural elements in the agency that allow a positive safety culture to thrive. OL provides a standardized process for identifying hazards and controlling risks across all functions, operations, and activities conducted across the NPS to meet organizational goals.

Grand Teton has made significant strides in OL to enhance risk management and foster a positive work safety culture. A comprehensive training schedule was developed, utilizing internal and external trainers, including a diverse cadre from various divisions in the park. Specific focus was given to effectively train park seasonal staff, with



OL classes offered to all employees. To embed OL into the park's culture, discussions about OL will be integrated into seasonal orientations, internal communications, and After Action Reviews (AARs). These initiatives collectively reflect the park's commitment to comprehensive risk management and safety practices, ensuring the well-being of its staff and visitors.





### Spring Opening

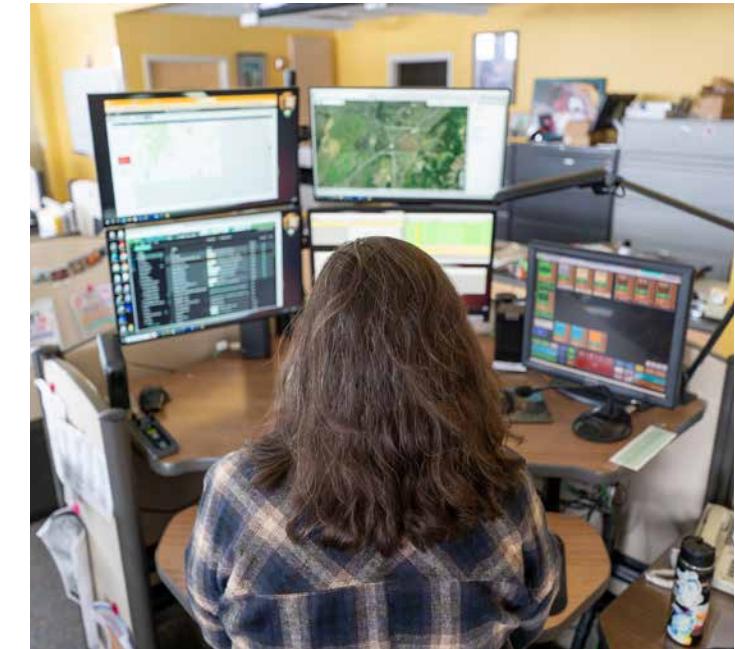
After an epic and very snowy 2022-23 winter, spring snow plowing operations began on the Teton Park Road on March 20. Crews worked diligently to try to open the road for recreational activities. Due to heavy snow loads, a long winter, and snow compaction on the road, clearing of the road took longer than usual. Equipment breakdowns also became a factor. On April 7, road crews were able to partially open the road to walking, cycling, and skating. Approximately four miles of road north of Taggart Lake Parking and approximately five miles south from Signal Mountain Lodge became available to park visitors. On April 26, crews were able to fully open the 14-mile section of road to recreational activities. The road opened to vehicles on time, as regularly scheduled, on May 1, thanks to the hard work of park crews.

In order to expedite spring plowing operations and ensure a timely opening of the Teton Park Road for spring 2024, road grooming operations for cross-country skiing were modified for the 2023-24 winter.



### Radio Program Enhancements

The park bolstered its radio program in 2023, enhancing communication capabilities across operations. The hiring and training of a new electronics technician strengthened the technical expertise of the team. Establishment of a permanent Signal Mountain tower, alongside utility integration, laid a foundation for improved coverage and reliability. Testing and development of encryption protocols underscored the commitment to secure communications, and separation of radio traffic between general operations and law enforcement and emergency medical services streamlined communication efficiency. The team also began site surveys for new Flagg repeater locations to expand coverage. Comprehensive radio system trainings were also offered, benefiting park staff, and ensuring effective radio usage across the park.



### Computer Aided Dispatch

In 2023, Grand Teton made strides in enhancing its Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Leveraging the expertise of a seasoned computer information systems CAD center manager, collaboration with the Teton Interagency Dispatch Center (TIDC) saw proficiency expand. Strategic meetings with park division chiefs facilitated the integration of CAD into various park operations. Furthermore, comprehensive training initiatives extended beyond the visitor and resource protection division, empowering field staff with the skills needed for effective CAD utilization in their respective roles.

The park remains committed to leveraging technology for improved operational efficiency and safety.



Photo Courtesy R. Politis



Photo Courtesy R. Politis

### VRP & EMS Program Updates

Grand Teton National Park underwent critical organizational updates within Visitor & Resource Protection (VRP) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), aligning structures with evolving needs. Formal audits for law enforcement and structural fire programs were completed.

Additionally, in collaboration with the NPS Regional Office, a cost modeling tool for park law enforcement programs was developed. Through these updates, the park remains dedicated to efficiency, excellence, and the preservation of visitor safety and park resources.



### Enhance Physical Security

Ensuring the safety of its personnel, Grand Teton implemented comprehensive measures for enhanced physical security. Employee readiness was heightened through annual training in active shooter and threat response. A revised building occupant emergency plan was put in place, accompanied by the development of a specialized active shooter emergency response plan. A thorough physical security assessment of all employee-occupied buildings was also completed, reinforcing the park's commitment to maintaining a secure and resilient working environment.



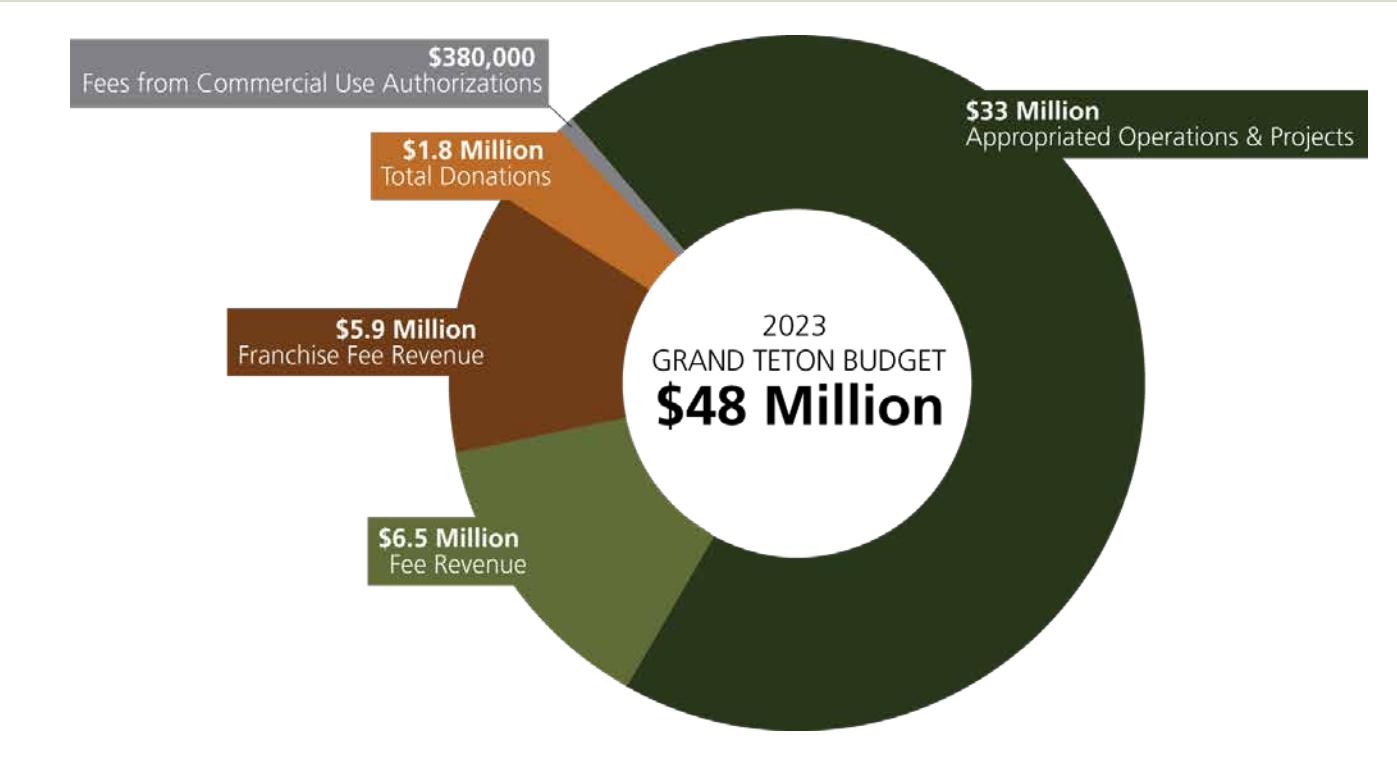
### Parkwide SharePoint

To enhance internal communication and resource accessibility, Grand Teton launched an internal intranet site. This centralized SharePoint site now serves as a repository for shared internal resources and documents.

Park employees now benefit from convenient access to a variety of internal tools and communications, fostering streamlined collaboration and information-sharing within the organization. This site leverages technology for improved workplace efficiency and connectivity.



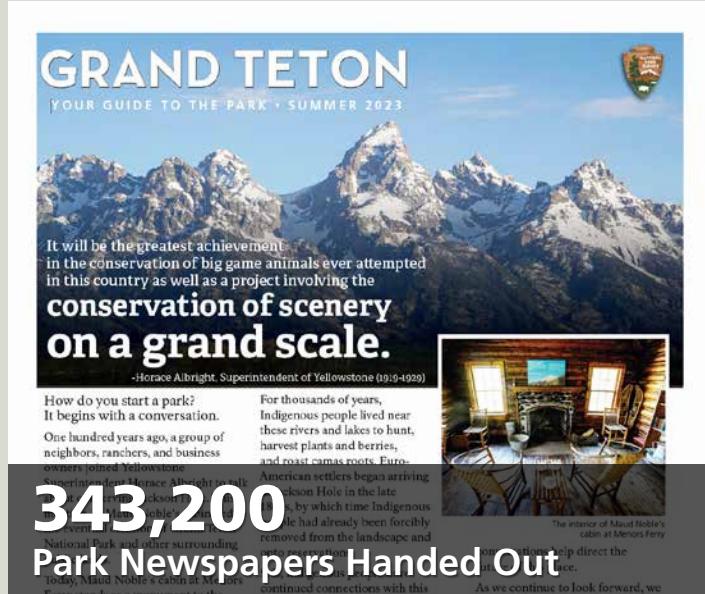
# GRAND TETON AT A GLANCE



## Where Visitors Stay Overnight

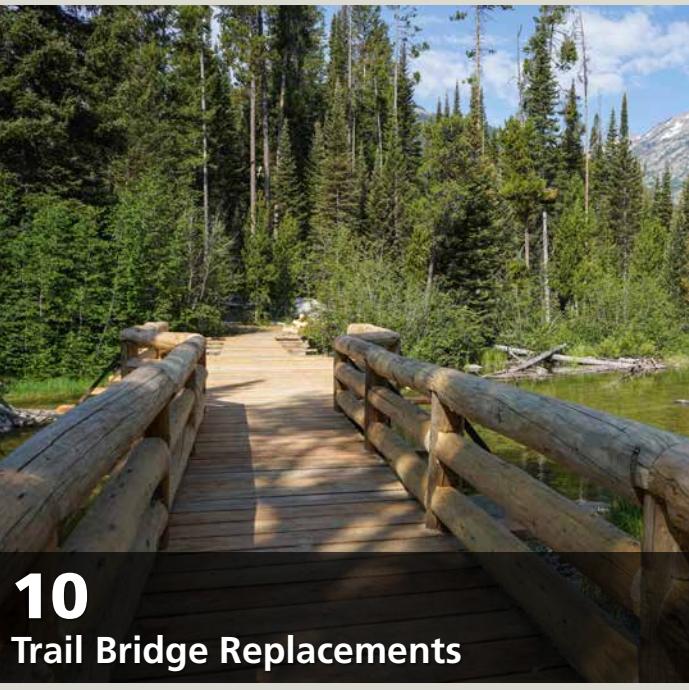
**17%**  
Stay inside  
the park

**83%**  
Stay outside  
the park





**10,747** Dumpster Trips Made  
For **888 Tons** of Garbage



**10**  
Trail Bridge Replacements



**49**  
Wolves in 5 Packs



**Watercraft Inspected 21,484**  
**28** Decontaminations of High Risk Boats



**2 Wildfires, 2 Natural, 0 Human Caused**  
Assisted **2 USFS, 48 National Incidents**



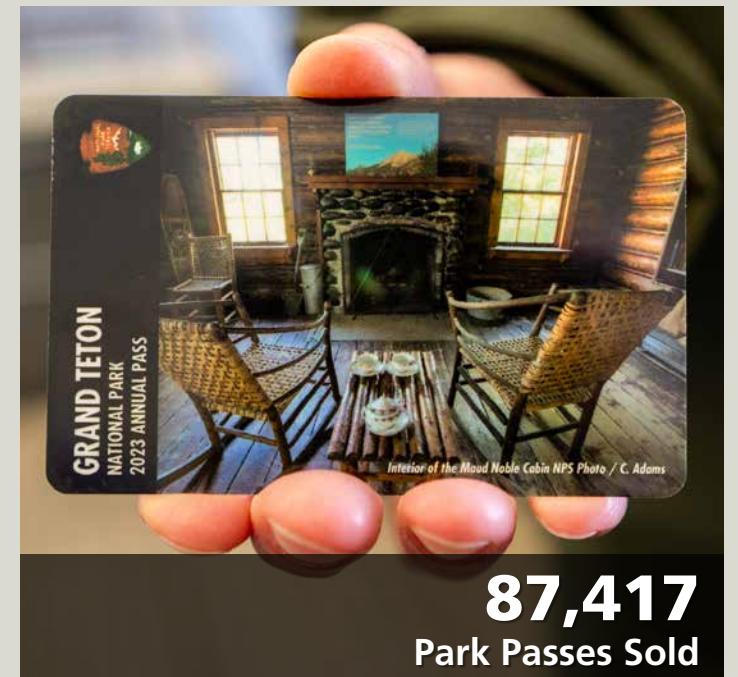
**3,539**  
Daily Summer Hikers in Backcountry



**2,398**  
People Lived in the Park During Summer

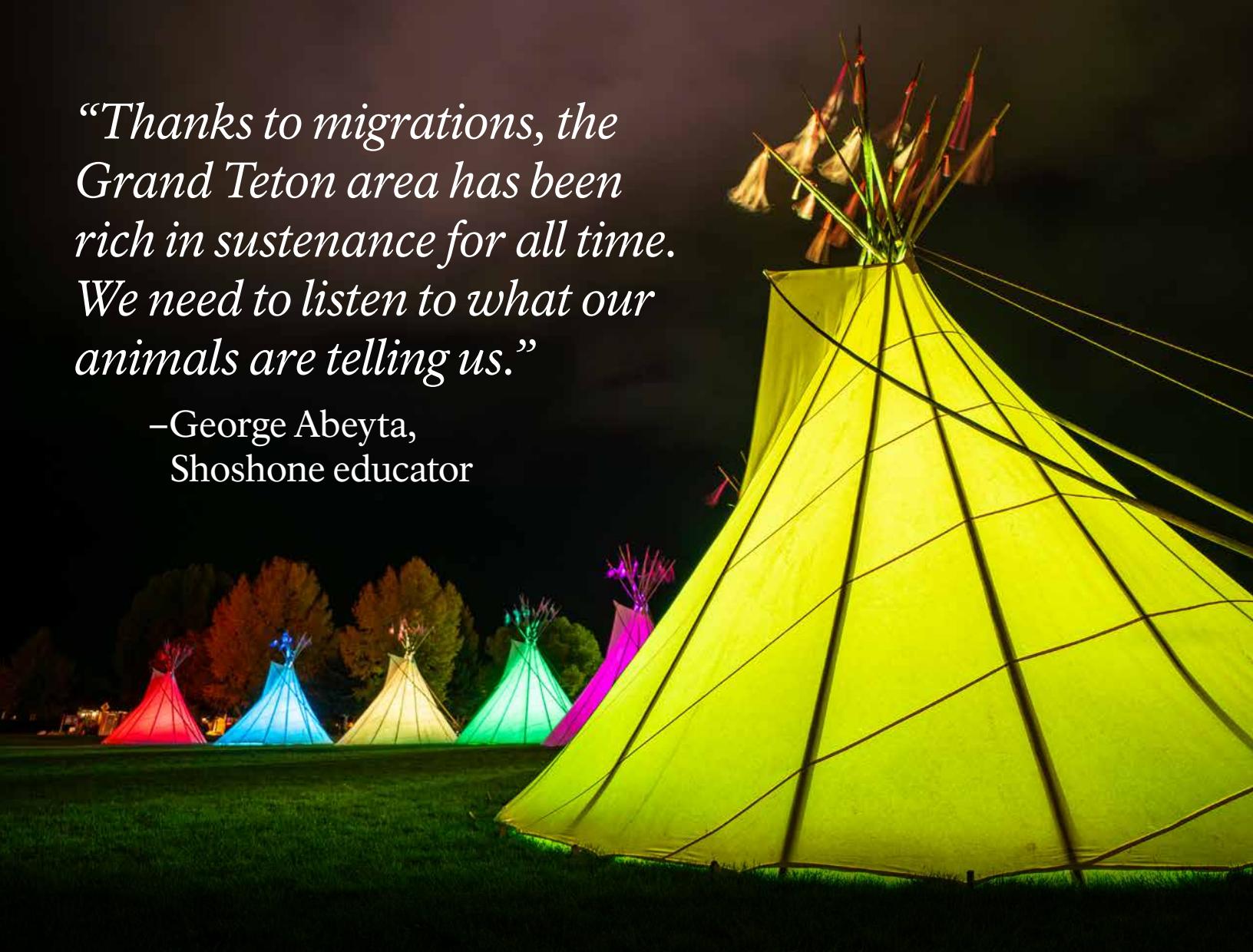


**1,069**  
Bear-Resistant Storage Lockers



*“Thanks to migrations, the Grand Teton area has been rich in sustenance for all time. We need to listen to what our animals are telling us.”*

—George Abeyta,  
Shoshone educator



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