



December 9, 2009

Board of Teton County Commissioners  
RE: Proposed Search and Rescue Facility

Submitted via email  
cc: Susan Johnson

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, we would like to submit brief comments regarding the upcoming December 15 discussion and hearing on variance requests and a final development plan for a Teton County Search and Rescue Facility near the intersection of Highway 22 and Highway 89.

The Conservation Alliance fully appreciates the efforts of Teton County Search and Rescue and the valuable services that their many volunteers provide for the community. We also appreciate the purpose of a more centralized location. As we stated at the November 9 Planning Commission hearing, we request an assurance that all other alternative locations, which could potentially have fewer impacts on natural and scenic resources, have been fully explored prior to the selection of the proposed site. With any proposal that lies within both the Natural Resources Overlay and Scenic Resources Overlay, and that is adjacent to a conservation easement, it is essential that all possible avenues have been explored to avoid impacts on our valley's critical resources. In the case that this project moves forward, in order to minimize these impacts, and impacts on adjacent areas, we hope that strong conditions are placed on the application and strictly enforced through time.

As we have consistently stated for other proposals, land-use decisions in Teton County should always consider incremental changes and impacts to the valley's limited and dwindling wildlife winter range. With regard to the application before you, the correspondence from Wyoming Game and Fish Department states, "Other mitigation measures outlined in the EA will also help to mitigate the effects of the proposed development on wildlife, however, it should be noted that mule deer near the town of Jackson do not have additional area to be displaced to." Particularly given the below-target status of mule deer, and the increasing number of factors that threaten the population, it is essential to not lose sight of potential impacts of development in the remaining winter range for this species. As our community makes difficult decisions about future land use and considers what types of tradeoffs have to be made to meet diverse needs and community goals, we believe, at the broad level, that it is critical to pursue options that uphold all of these goals in some manner. Protecting dwindling habitat in and around the "Y" area is particularly relevant given the comprehensive planning process underway, where the draft plan has proposed potentially high levels of mixed-use and residential development in adjacent areas.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cindy Harger  
Interim Executive Director

Kristy Bruner  
Community Planning Director