



Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
(307) 733-9417 • www.jhalliance.org

January 19, 2010

Dear Board of County Commissioners,

Thank you for your attention to this letter. We are writing to support the coalition of community members in their efforts to place a proposal for \$1.5 million for open space acquisition on the ballot for the Special Purpose Excise Tax this year.

One of the largest threats to wildlife in our valley today is development on private lands and the corresponding loss of critical habitat. Permanent protection of these lands is one of the primary ways to ensure the viability of many of our sensitive wildlife species into the future, in addition to protecting our vistas and historic Western culture.

A public funding source for these conservation efforts will enhance existing programs in our valley. The Scenic Resources Preservation Program, created by Teton County in the 1980s and reaffirmed in the 1990s, is an ideal vehicle for this tax program. We think this can be a collaborative public partnership to existing private conservation efforts, and the monies will be instrumental in leveraging private funds and enabling the community to take advantage of time-sensitive opportunities. When the right land opportunities arise, the money will be available.

This community's well-documented top priority is the protection of wildlife and natural resources. A public funding source will allow members of the community as well as visitors to play a role in wildlife and open space preservation. In comprehensive planning processes over the past few decades, the issue of public funding for open space has consistently risen to the top of the priorities list. Now, we have the opportunity to make this a reality,

The Conservation Alliance has consistently advocated on behalf of the irreplaceable wildlife and natural resources in this valley. We recognize the need for a public source of funding to enable the preservation of dwindling habitats for sensitive species, and are supportive of the community efforts to make it happen.

Thank you again for your attention. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Cindy Harger
Interim Executive Director

Kristy Bruner
Community Planning Director