

January 30, 2012

Tim Fuchs
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
P.O. Box 67
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

Dear Supervisor Fuchs,

The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance has followed the incident of the female cougar and her kittens in east Jackson over the past week. We are concerned about the steps taken and the distressing results, but more importantly, we see the need for addressing the conditions that brought this cougar and her kittens within urban neighborhoods.

The Alliance recognizes the difficult position that Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGF) has with regard to individuals feeding wildlife within Teton County. In neither the town nor the county does WGF have authority to enforce the regulations against feeding. We would urge WGF to take this opportunity to inform and educate the public about the extreme negative impacts when feeding occurs. Feeding produces other wildlife health issues that can bring about death for these animals, but in this case, drawing predators into neighborhoods could result in harm or danger to humans as well. There is always the chance that we will have deer, elk or moose in neighborhoods without feeding, but the increase in wildlife density with feeding almost assures that predators will follow.

The Alliance regrets that WGF felt that they had to trap this family and relocate them. The fact that trapping has been unsuccessful, that the kittens have been separated from their mother, and that they still occupy that area without the skills and experience provided by her, should trigger efforts by the Town of Jackson, Teton County and WGF to develop consistent regulations and enforcement prohibiting feeding of wildlife by individuals throughout the county.

The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance offers any assistance needed to engage and inform the public on this issue. With our abundant and diverse wildlife and a community that is expanding, conflicts will continue to increase. The community has repeatedly identified wildlife as the #1 priority for our county. Everyone should understand the need for tolerance of all species in order to maintain our unique valley. We need to have a better method of addressing how to live with all of the wildlife around us.

Sincerely,

Louise Lasley, Program Director
Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance