



Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
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Jackson Hole needs Environment Commission

The formation of an Environment Commission was a suggested strategy from the draft Comprehensive Plan and is now in the hands of the elected officials. Hopefully, the commission will be formed in time to contribute to the review of the plan itself.

However, despite the fact that wildlife protection and stewardship of natural resources are the community's top priorities, and despite the positive response by many in the community to the idea of creating an Environment Commission, there is still some resistance on the part of some of our elected officials. The Conservation Alliance believes that this commission would be a valuable addition to the process of writing public policy, and that its implementation should not be delayed any longer. And we encourage people to tell their elected officials just that.

Our community is unique in its location within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, one of the largest intact ecosystems in the lower 48, and we are adjacent to two world-famous national parks. We cannot step out of our front doors without breathing in the fresh mountain air and soaking up the majestic vistas that are visible from almost anywhere in the town or county. Each decision that we make regarding development amounts and patterns has impacts not only on the building sites themselves, but on the surrounding lands and environment as well. Whether it is a displaced mule deer herd or the interruption of the natural flow of a creek, the indirect, "downstream" impacts of our decisions are very real. Knowing all that we can about our ecosystem, and the impacts that we are having on it, will lead to an increased understanding of the environment that we live in and a better ability to plan for our community's future.

The value of the current system of project-by-project analysis of environmental impacts cannot be understated. Such analyses and efforts most certainly should be applauded and will always be essential. What our community has long needed to augment this incremental collection of information is a comprehensive look at cumulative environmental impacts on the health of the ecosystem over time and valley wide. We would like to express support for the elected officials who recognize the benefit of taking every opportunity to increase our understanding of this incredible ecosystem, and encourage those who do not to reconsider their position.

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