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Conservation Alliance hosts talks by planning expert Mark White on tools for shifting development potential in Teton County

(JACKSON, WYO.) Can we protect Jackson Hole’s wildlife and quality of life while still allowing for growth and development?

The recently approved policies section of the Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan says that to protect our wildlife and scenery, we should move development potential from rural, sensitive areas to places in the county that are already developed. This would help preserve the valley’s remaining open spaces, which provide vistas and important wildlife habitat, while encouraging any new development to occur in areas that already have infrastructure to support it. However, the mechanisms to enable this shift are not yet spelled out in the Comp Plan documents.

“One of our goals is to help provide solutions for keeping the valley wild and beautiful,” said Trevor Stevenson, Executive Director of the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. “That’s why we’re bringing planning expert Mark White here to share his expertise on tools to shift development patterns that other communities have used successfully – and that could be used here, too.”

White will be in Jackson on Oct. 6 for a 2 p.m. technical meeting with town and county elected officials, planning commissioners and planning staff, as well as interested members of the public, followed by an additional public forum at 6 p.m. Both presentations will take place in the County Commissioners chambers at 200 S. Willow, Jackson.

“This community has been discussing shifting development potential for many years,” said Stevenson. “Now – as our Comp Plan is moving toward completion – it’s an excellent time to begin concrete steps toward designing the policies and regulations that will achieve our community’s vision.”

The section of the Comp Plan that elected officials approved in June identifies the protection of wildlife, scenery and natural resources as our community’s top priority. Moving development potential from rural, sensitive areas to areas more suitable for development is one key way that our community can achieve this priority.

White, a leading and extensively published planning consultant with White and Smith, LLC, will provide an overview of available mechanisms to shift development potential, along with a more detailed exploration and recommendation of the most promising options for Teton County, taking into account the relevant history and unique context of this area.

“The best way to move forward in Teton County with shifting development potential will be with an array of approaches instead of looking for one ‘silver bullet,’ ” Stevenson said. “This project aims to provide several practical tools to the town and county governments and the community, and will lay the groundwork for more detailed exploration in the future.”

Details in Brief:

Who: Mark White, Esq. AICP, of White and Smith, LLC

What: Two presentations on shifting development potential in Teton County

Where: County Commissioners chambers, 200 S. Willow, Jackson, Wyoming

When: Thursday, October 6, 2011

Two presentations, both open to the public:

2 p.m. – Technical presentation to town and county elected officials,
planning commissioners and planning staff

6 p.m. – Public forum

Cost: Free

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The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to responsible land stewardship in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, to ensure that human activities are in harmony with the area's irreplaceable wildlife, scenic and other natural resources.