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## Executive Summary

**Date: December 5, 2023**

Applicant Name: Trout Unlimited

City, County, and State: Jackson, Teton County, Wyoming

Length of Time: Three years beginning January 1, 2025

Estimated Completion Date: December 31, 2027

Trout Unlimited seeks \$299,189 in WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP) Phase I funds to increase the health and resiliency of the Snake River Headwaters by sustaining the nascent Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group (SRHWG). The Snake River Headwaters is an iconic landscape that comprises most of the HUC6 watershed spanning a four-county region in northwest Wyoming (Teton, Sublette, Fremont, and Lincoln counties) and includes the following major tributaries: Lewis River, Pacific Creek, the Buffalo Fork, Spread Creek, the Gros Ventre River, Flat Creek, Fish Creek, Fall Creek, Hoback River, and Greys River. Timely issues including water management impacts from Jackson Lake Dam; effects of prolonged drought on water quantity; impacts of development; degraded water quality; aquatic, riparian and wetland habitat degradation and loss; the impacts of levees and bank hardening; lowered water tables; and adaptation of strategies in the face of a changing climate, have highlighted the need for more coordination, planning, and research to address current and future challenges to watershed health. A groundswell of stakeholder and community interest in addressing multiple aspects of watershed health have spurred the creation of the new SRHWG. Numerous federal, state, and local agencies, private landowners, water users, recreational guides and outfitters, conservation nonprofits, scientists, and business leaders have been engaged in the effort to date, but more support is needed to allow the new watershed group to become firmly established and work collaboratively towards achieving its goals. With support from the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), SRHWG will implement a robust suite of stakeholder and community outreach and input activities, including intentional outreach to the Latino community and Tribes; coordinate regular SRHWG, working group, and steering committee meetings; help the SRHWG working groups advance collaborative efforts; and pre-plan for a future stakeholder-driven integrated watershed restoration plan. Working together, members of the SRHWG will alleviate regional water concerns by building a shared knowledge base, deepening relationships, and increasing trust. The strong partnership will enable the group to tackle watershed-scale challenges with streamlined projects, reduce misinformation, expand public awareness, and provide elected officials with improved information to make informed decisions.

The proposed planning efforts include Federal facilities - primarily National Park (Grand Teton and Yellowstone) and National Forest (Bridger-Teton) lands, with a small portion of US Fish and Wildlife Service (National Elk Refuge) lands, as well as two major storage reservoirs of the Bureau of Reclamation's Upper Snake System (Jackson Lake and Palisades Reservoir).

## Project Location

The focus of the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group (SRHWG) is the Snake Headwaters HUC 6 watershed (170401) in northwest Wyoming. The Snake Headwaters watershed originates in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming, drains to the Teton Range to the west and the Gros Ventre Range to the east in the valley of Jackson Hole, and then flows through the Snake River Canyon and into Palisades Reservoir and the South Fork of the Snake River in Idaho. The geographic scope of the SRHWG includes the following HUC 6 watersheds: Snake Headwaters (17040101); Gros Ventre (17040102); and Greys-Hoback (17040103). This encompasses the Snake River mainstem and all major tributaries upstream of Palisades Reservoir, including Jackson Lake. It excludes the Salt River Basin HUC 8 watershed (17040105), which already has an established, BOR CWMP-supported watershed group. There is no geographic overlap between these two efforts and they encompass two very different communities. Jackson Lake and Palisades Reservoir are major storage reservoirs of the Bureau of Reclamation's Upper Snake System managed by the Upper Snake Field Office.

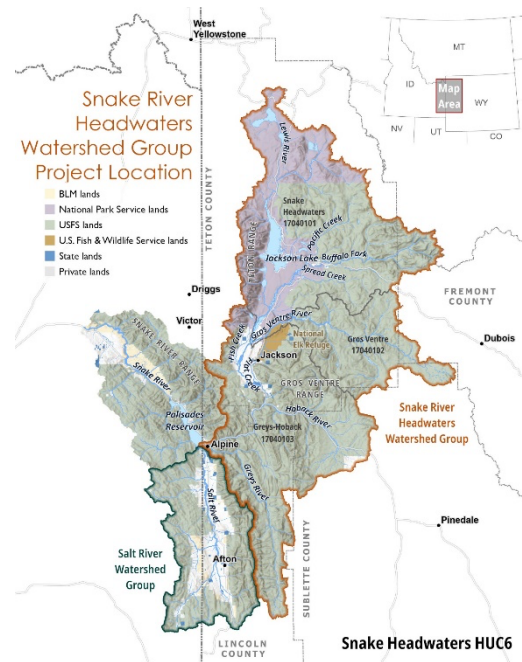


Figure 1: Project Map

## Applicant Category

Trout Unlimited (TU) is applying for grant funding as a New Watershed Group, the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group (SRHWG), based in the Snake Headwaters HUC 6 watershed in northwest Wyoming. TU is applying under this category because the watershed group was designed over the course of the current year and is just getting started – it held its first kickoff meeting in late October 2023. No other watershed group currently exists for this geography, the group requires more substantial support for building its capacity and completing outreach to underrepresented stakeholders, and the group has completed no watershed restoration planning.

TU has worked in the Snake Headwaters watershed (above Palisades Reservoir) for 16 years through its Western Water and Habitat Program and has had a presence in Teton County since 1983, when the local Jackson Hole Trout Unlimited chapter was founded. TU leads or participates in the Upper Snake / Salt Multiagency Coordination, Jackson Hole Clean Water Coalition, Snake River Agencies, Upper Snake Collaborative, Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee Fisheries, and Teton County Water Quality Master Planning meetings. While these existing coordination groups and meetings have tremendous value, conversations with partners, stakeholders, and the community highlighted the need for increased, action-oriented coordination, collaboration, monitoring, research, and solutions that would best be addressed by the formation of a new watershed group.

The relationships built through the above-mentioned collaborative efforts created a strong foundation to establish the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group at an important point

in time where TU's partners and the Jackson Hole community are calling for more action and proactive, innovative solutions as well as more and increasingly diverse stakeholders at the table. In spring 2023, TU and the LegacyWorks Group facilitation team, together with a temporary steering committee composed of staff from Grand Teton National Park, the Snake River Fund, Teton Conservation District, Town of Jackson, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department, set into motion the formation of the new group through initial watershed group development activities described in Section E.1.2.2., Sub-criterion No. B2., Project Benefits on Page 18. Throughout this process, it has become apparent that support from the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Planning (CWMP) Grant is essential to the success of the new watershed group. The over 100 entities with an interest in the watershed and 85 participants in the design phase demonstrate the complexity and challenges of managing and facilitating the SRHWG and positioning the group to achieve its mission of "bringing a broad coalition of partners together to ensure a resilient and healthy Snake River Headwaters ecosystem with clean and ample water to meet the needs of current and future generations." The BOR CWMP grant will allow the new SRHWG to cultivate and amplify stakeholder engagement and improve and protect watershed health and resiliency into the future through coordination, planning, and knowledge exchange.

### **Eligibility of Applicant**

TU is the nation's largest grassroots coldwater conservation organization with a mission to bring together diverse interests to care for and recover rivers and streams so our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon. TU works to achieve this mission on a local, state, and national level through an extensive volunteer network and dedicated staff. Headquartered outside of Washington, D.C., TU is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1959 that currently has approximately 350 staff working in offices from Alaska to North Carolina.

TU has an annual budget of \$85.9 million and currently manages over 300 different federal grants. During the past five-year period, TU has received \$55,409,665 of federal direct and pass-through funding. TU is subject to annual audits every year under the OMB's Uniform Guidance for federal grants. TU is a low-risk auditee and has received a clean federal grant audit the past two years with no reportable conditions. The fiscal aspects of the TU and BOR partnership are overseen by TU's Chief Financial Officer, who oversees 11 staff members who handle a variety of fiscal and administrative tasks for federal grants.

TU is sponsoring the development of the new watershed group due to its mission and experience managing several watershed groups supported by CWMP grant funding, including the Black River Landscape Restoration Planning for Apache Trout Climate Resilience in New Mexico, Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership in Colorado, South Fork of the Boise River Watershed in Southwest Idaho, Priest River Watershed Group in Idaho, the Willwood Working Group #3 in Wyoming, and the Salt River Watershed Group in Wyoming. Additionally, TU works on the ground in communities throughout the West, such as the Yakima River Basin and Upper Colorado Basin, finding collaborative solutions to the twenty-first-century challenges of drought, habitat loss, and aging infrastructure by convening diverse stakeholders in pursuit of shared goals – and is therefore very capable of promoting the sustainable use of water resources. Through TU's mission and focus on coldwater conservation, as well as its model of basing staff

in communities and watersheds across the West, TU is both in a position to significantly affect or be affected by the quality or quantity of water in a watershed.

TU is prepared to administer the CWMP grant and invest staff time into ensuring that the new SRHWG is a success. TU's standing in the watershed from previous project work, multi-agency and collaborative working groups, and community connections ensures our capability of promoting the sustainable use of water resources in the watershed. TU is partnering with LegacyWorks Group (LWG), an experienced Wyoming 501c(3) who works to address key needs and fill gaps that unlock community and conservation potential while shifting culture and building capacity in ways needed to tip the scales towards transformative, systemic long-term change. LWG's team will serve as a neutral, 3<sup>rd</sup> party subrecipient to facilitate and advance the goals and objectives of the new watershed group. LWG has worked in the Snake Headwaters region since 2014 and has been involved in numerous water-related initiatives, including facilitation and project management of the Jackson Hole Clean Water Coalition, the Upper Snake Collaborative, the Teton Water User's Association, Teton Creek Corridor, and efforts along Flat Creek and the Teton River. The LWG team led the design phase for the SRHWG over the last year, facilitating meetings, conducting network outreach, surveys, and preliminary data mapping.

## **Project Description**

### **Goals**

SRHWG's goals, objectives, and activities for the project are the culmination of a series of three design phase sessions that mapped the stakeholders in the network, developed a mission and collaborative structure, and identified goals and key issues going forward. There are five main project goals that will bring SRHWG closer to its overarching mission to "bring a broad coalition of partners together to ensure a resilient and healthy Snake River Headwaters ecosystem with clean and ample water to meet the needs of current and future generations." These high-level goals were identified by the ~85 unique participants in the design phase.

1. Connect Stakeholders: LWG will facilitate the SRHWG's stakeholder meetings, working group meetings and steering committee meetings, in order to build relationships, increase communication, and coordinate activities to improve transparency, navigate conflicts, and build collaborative capacity.
2. Build the Knowledge Base: The SRHWG will exchange knowledge and perspectives to enhance the collective understanding of the watershed; identify knowledge and data gaps; and work together to support and expand monitoring, synthesis, and data sharing.
3. Engage: The SRHWG will execute a robust communications and outreach plan to promote new and existing stakeholder involvement. The engagement effort will provide communication on watershed health, issues and concerns to support decision-making and increase public awareness, engagement, and support for collaborative solutions. It will include intentional outreach to Tribes and Latino residents as well as offer Spanish translation services for Watershed Group materials.

4. Set Priorities: The project will allow SRHWG's working groups to prioritize key issues affecting the watershed's long-term health and resilience and determine projects and resources to address them.

5. Act: Community partners and the SRHWG will engage in joint actions to address identified priorities, maintain ecological function, sustain the needs of water users and of the ecosystem into the future, and prepare for a future Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP).

### **Approach**

TU is applying for this CWMP Phase I funding opportunity as a New Watershed Group and will be undertaking activities under **Task A - Watershed Group Development**. These proposed activities align with the goals above and will help to firmly establish and support the SRHWG and ensure that it is representative of the full diversity of stakeholders in the Snake River Headwaters watershed. TU has identified four main activities for the support and continued development of the SRHWG, including but not limited to the following:

#### **1. Stakeholder and Community Outreach and Input:**

- a. Communications and Outreach Plan Development:
  - i. Website Establishment: Creation of a dedicated SRHWG website to centralize information, ensuring it aligns with Steering Committee and Outreach and Community Engagement working group's vision.
  - ii. Marketing Materials: Designing a visual identity for the group and materials for promotional purposes, including logo development, popup tent, stickers, and brochure.
  - iii. E-Newsletter Production and Email Communications: Regular (target: quarterly) distribution of engaging e-newsletters to keep stakeholders updated and connected. Email updates to full SRHWG as needed.
- b. Community Presence and Input Gathering:
  - i. Community Event Participation: Active involvement and tabling on behalf of the SRHWG in local events for direct engagement with residents and stakeholders.
  - ii. Advertisement in Local Media: Using local print and online media outlets to reach a broader audience and promote public involvement in watershed group meetings and public meetings.
  - iii. Public Meetings: Organizing informational, engaging meetings to provide information on SRHWG activities and gather information about community interest and priorities related to water issues (1 per year).
  - iv. Engagement Events: Special events (1 per year) co-hosted with SRHWG stakeholders such as field trips, volunteer days, project site visits, to increase community awareness of watershed issues and solutions.
  - v. Spanish Translation Services: Making information accessible to non-English speakers.
- c. Stakeholder Outreach for Underrepresented Groups:
  - i. Diversity in Stakeholder Engagement: Ensuring various perspectives by proactively reaching out to underrepresented groups, including interviews and on-site visits.
  - ii. Collaboration with Voices JH: Partnering with a local organization for culturally tailored outreach to underrepresented groups.
  - iii. Tribal Engagement: Fostering relationships with indigenous groups, reducing barriers to participation.

- iv. Spanish Translation Services: Ensuring inclusivity by providing watershed group information in multiple languages.
- 2. Coordination of Regular SRHWG and Steering Committee Meetings:**
- a. Meeting Organization and Facilitation:
    - i. Meeting Organization: Efficient planning and organization for quarterly full SRHWG meetings, including speaker coordination, meeting logistics, agendas and notes, and meeting-related communication to stakeholders.
    - ii. Effective Facilitation: Skilled moderation to ensure productive discussions and progress tracking.
    - iii. Action Item Management: Ensuring follow-ups and commitments are tracked and addressed promptly.
    - iv. Steering Committee Oversight: Organizing and managing the steering committee's activities, including quarterly meetings, input on full SRHWG meeting agenda and general direction, and nomination and election processes.
- 3. Coordinating and Facilitating Regular Working Group Meetings to Advance Knowledge Exchange and Projects:**
- a. Working Group Coordination:
    - i. Meeting Coordination: Scheduling quarterly meetings for the 1) Water Management and Flows, 2) Data and Monitoring, 3) Ecosystems, and 4) Outreach and Community Engagement working groups, ensuring regular and efficient gatherings.
    - ii. Facilitation Expertise: Guiding discussions and activities within these groups to maximize productivity and actionable outcomes. Supporting follow-ups, action items, and projects.
    - iii. Knowledge Exchange: Compiling knowledge and information produced by working groups, making these findings accessible to all stakeholders, and gathering background information in support of working groups.
- 4. Pre-planning for a Future Stakeholder-driven Watershed Restoration Plan:**
- a. Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) Pre-planning:
    - i. Research and Benchmarking: Studying successful integrated watershed management plans to model SRHWG's efforts.
    - ii. Identifying Key Elements: Defining essential components of a future IWMP based on thorough research and SRHWG input.
    - iii. Stakeholder and Community Engagement: Involving participants in shaping and refining the plan's elements and directions.
    - iv. Contractor Requirements and Budget Drafting: Planning and framing the resources necessary for the successful execution of the envisioned IWMP.

Activities 1, 2, and 3 will address Task Area A – Watershed Group Development. Our approach to watershed group development relies on TU working alongside an experienced facilitation team, LegacyWorks Group (LWG), as a subrecipient to manage the effort as a neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> party. This allows all agencies and organizations to participate in the effort rather than being the facilitator, increases trust, and is appropriate for the sheer size and complexity of the watershed group network. LWG has been at the helm for the initial 3 design phase sessions and kickoff

meetings and is well-equipped to manage much of the scope of work outlined in the activities above. The project will use a hybrid management approach where TU oversees and manages the CWMP grant and is heavily engaged in its implementation, but the facilitation team and independent contractors (for outreach to underrepresented stakeholders, graphic design, and translation services), are tasked with activities that would benefit from outside expertise.

Activity 4 will also address Task Area A – Watershed Group Development. A portion of this grant will be used for pre-planning activities for preliminary watershed restoration planning. Once the SRHWG and its working groups have become well-established, the SRHWG will identify desired elements of a future Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP). Per the EPA, an IWMP is by definition is a planning strategy meant to maximize the social, economic, and environmental management of water resources and uses. Part of this pre-planning will include involving stakeholders and the community in identifying project types and innovative tools to improve watershed health and respond to watershed concerns, needs, and issues to include in the future plan. Pre-planning activities will also include background research on successful IWMPs, identifying research and contractor needs for a future watershed restoration plan and beginning to develop an action plan and budget for this future phase of work.

## **E.1. Criteria**

### **E.1.1. Evaluation Criterion A—Watershed Group Diversity & Geographic Scope**

#### ***E.1.1.1. Watershed Group Diversity***

##### **Affected Stakeholders & Support for the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group**

TU and project partners plan to represent the full geographic scope of the Snake River Headwaters HUC6 watershed as described above. Please see the map on Page 9 for land ownerships. The largest landowners in the watershed are Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton National Forest. Leadership and employees of these agencies have already engaged in and expressed a strong interest in the activities of the SRHWG.

To convene a successful watershed group, TU and partners identified the need to engage the diversity of affected stakeholders, including federal, state, and local agencies, conservation districts, county and municipal governments, utilities, nonprofit organizations, Tribal representatives, irrigators, agricultural producers, golf courses, river recreation and fishing outfitters and guides, business leaders, and other interested community groups and members. Roles range from land managers, water managers, resource managers, and conservation organizations to business owners, private landowners, irrigators, and community residents, and their interactions with water resources are varied and complex. Working with a trusted third-party facilitator, LWG, that was familiar with the regional watershed and stakeholders was crucial due to their experience and established relationships within the community and the scale and complexity of the group. Their leadership in facilitating the SRHWG's design phase, including multiple meetings and outreach efforts, allowed for a comprehensive understanding of diverse perspectives and ensured a more inclusive and well-informed establishment of the watershed group. This phase encompassed three fundamental components:

- 1. System Mapping:** This process identified all stakeholders and sovereign nations across the Snake River Headwaters watershed, mapping their areas of interest. By April of 2023, this mapping provided an overview of prospective interested parties, setting the stage for



deeper engagement. Collaboration with the University of Wyoming's WyACT project also identified preliminary data resources, initiatives, and needs across the watershed.

2. **Watershed Group Design:** Conducted through a series of three hybrid meetings engaging interested parties, this stage defined the group's purpose, principles, goals, structure, and preliminary objectives. Emphasizing transparency and inclusivity, this process identified key concerns, outlined the group's purpose, and pinpointed coordination opportunities based on system mapping results. Meeting participation is reflected in the graphics below as is a full list of all participants. An additional focus of these meetings was to build trust and organic connections among watershed members.
3. **Kickoff Meeting and Structure:** Marking the transition to the operational phase, the kickoff meeting unveiled the SRHWG's established goals, principles, and structure. The structure includes a General Membership composed of individuals and representatives from various organizations, agencies and sectors from within the watershed and downstream Snake River Plain; a 15-member Steering Committee to oversee the group's operations, cultivate a collaborative culture, and provide strategic leadership (voted in by members); Working Groups; and Facilitator. The kick off meeting celebrated founding members, established four working groups around focus areas – Water Management & Flow, Data & Monitoring, Outreach & Community Engagement, and Ecosystems, and rallied participation for future endeavors.

These phases of the design process collectively laid the initial foundation and direction of the SRHWG. TU and the SRHWG continue to actively target outreach to groups not previously contacted while aiming to gather input from additional stakeholders affected by watershed concerns and SRHWG activities. Alongside expanding stakeholder engagement, the SRHWG will pursue a comprehensive communications and outreach strategy to foster community involvement, recruit new stakeholders, and disseminate information. The SRHWG aims to establish a collaborative forum that enhances existing efforts, fostering inclusivity among diverse stakeholders. Participants are supportive of the current efforts and 16 letters of support from these stakeholders are included as Attachment A and are bolded in the Stakeholder List below. The BOR Upper Snake Field Office has been actively engaged in the SRHWG, participating in both the design phase and working groups focusing on Water Management and Flows, Data and Monitoring, and Ecosystems.

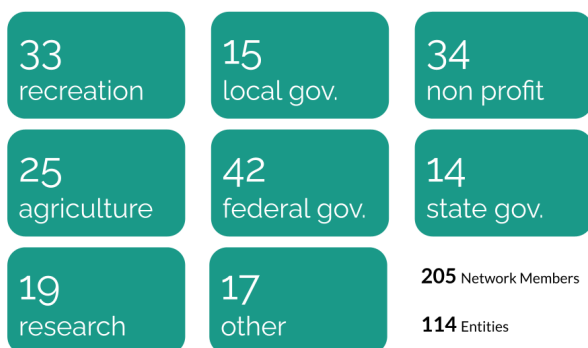


Figure 2: Network Mapping members, by Sector



Figure 3: Design Phase Meeting Participants by Sector

**Stakeholder List (Temporary Steering Committee Members are \* and organizations that have provided letters of support are in bold face).**

3 Creek Golf	JH Clean Water Coalition	Spring Gulch Irrigators
<b>American Rivers</b>	<b>JH EcoTour Adventures</b>	Star Valley Conservation District
American Whitewater	JH Fly Fishing School	Sublette County Conservation District
Aramark (Mad River)	JH Golf and Tennis	Taylor Ranch
Aspen Pines Water & Sewer District	<b>JH Land Trust</b>	<b>Town of Jackson*</b>
<b>Bridger-Teton National Forest</b>	JH Mountain Resort	<b>Teton Conservation District*</b>
Broken Arrow Ranch / City Kids	JH News and Guide	<b>Teton County, WY</b>
BLM	JH One Fly	Teton Science School
BOR	JH Trout Unlimited Chapter	Teton Village Water and Sewer District
Caribou Targhee National Forest	JH Wildlife Safaris	Trout Unlimited*
Committee of Nine	JD High Country Outfitters	University of Wyoming
Coombs Outdoors	JH Whitewater	<b>University of Wyoming WyACT*</b>
Darwin Ranch	LegacyWorks Group	Upper Snake Collaborative
<b>Fish the Fly Guide Services</b>	Lewis and Clark River Expeditions	US Army Corps of Engineers
Friends of Bridger Teton	Little Jennie Ranch	US Department of Agriculture
Friends of the Teton River	Lockhart Cattle Company	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Grand Fishing Adventures	Lower Valley Energy	US Geological Survey
Grand Teton Fly Fishing	Magic Valley Agricultural District	Voices JH
<b>Grand Teton National Park*</b>	Mead Ranch	Westbank Anglers
<b>Grand Teton National Park Foundation</b>	National Elk Refuge	Wildlife Conservation Society
Greater Yellowstone Coalition	National Park Conservation Association	Wilson Sewer District
Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Wind River Reservation - Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes
GYCC Hydrology Subcommittee	Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative	WorldCast Anglers
Hatchet and Feuz Ranches	One 22	WYldlife Fund
Henry's Fork Foundation	Orvis JH	Wyoming Angling Company
Hoback Water District	Parks and Recreation	WY Department of Environmental Quality
Idaho Department of Water Resources	PAWS	<b>WY Game and Fish Department*</b>
Idaho Power	<b>Protect Our Waters JH</b>	WY Outdoor Council
Idaho State University	<b>Rendezvous River Sports</b>	WY State Engineer's Office
Idaho Water Users Association	<b>Snake River Fund*</b>	WY State Trust Lands
Jackson Fork Ranch	<b>Snake River Ranch</b>	WY Water Development Office
JH Anglers	Snake River Sporting Club	Yellowstone National Park
JH Chamber of Commerce	South Park Supply Ditch	

*E.1.1.2. Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope*

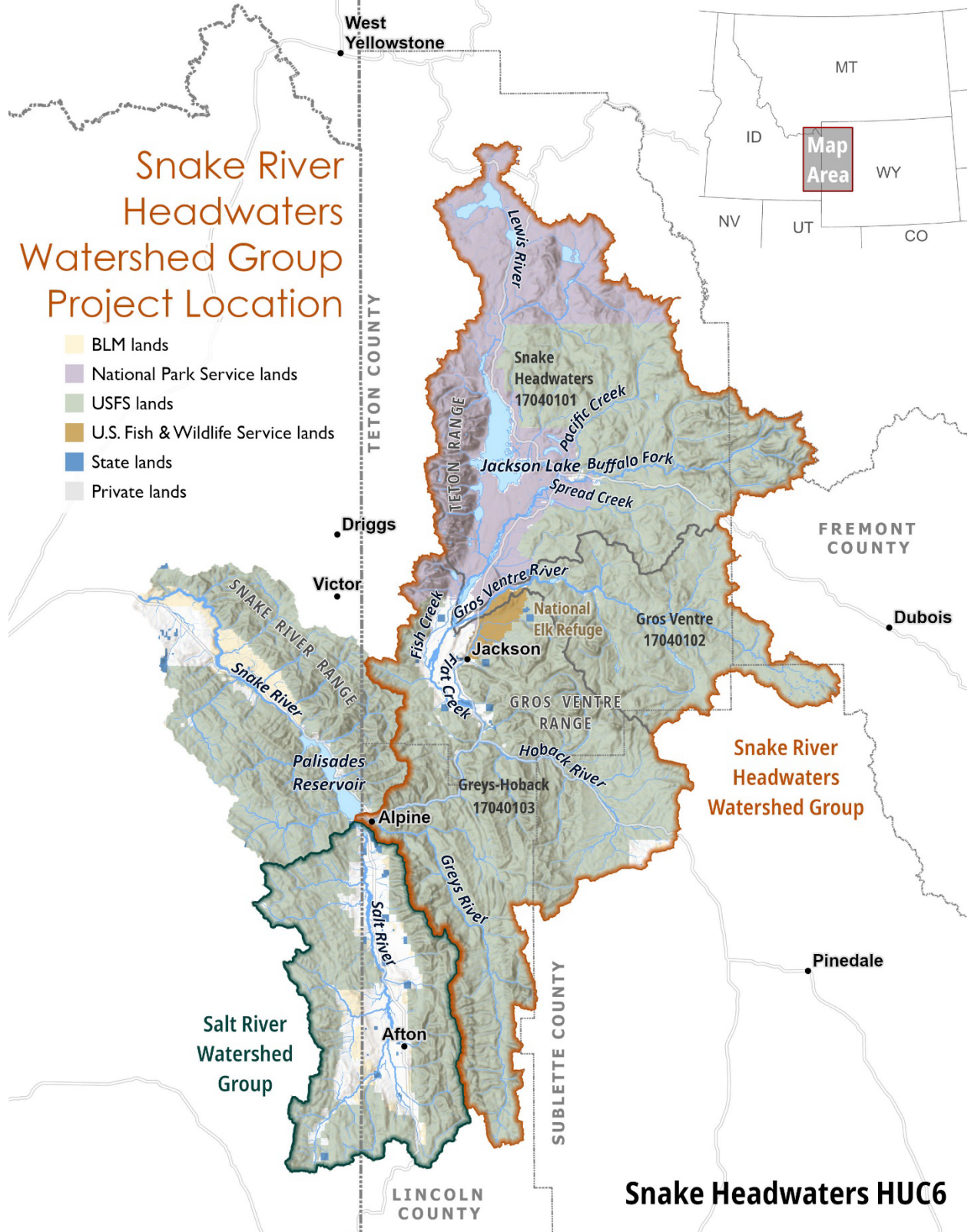


Figure 4: Project Map

The geographic boundary of the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group (SRHWG) is the Snake Headwaters HUC 6 watershed (170401) in northwest Wyoming as displayed above and described in detail in the project location section on page 2. The watershed encompasses the valley and community of Jackson Hole, including the Town of Jackson, the Wilson, Teton Village, and Hoback Junction communities, and the rural Town of Bondurant in Sublette County. Few western rivers enjoy a backdrop as unique and spectacular as the upper Snake River in western Wyoming. The system of headwater streams and rivers that creates the Snake—the largest tributary to the Columbia River—lies at the heart of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the largest intact functioning ecosystem in the United States outside of Alaska. The Snake and its tributaries and spring creeks around Jackson Hole and the native fish populations they support are keystones in one of the most iconic landscapes in the world. The native Snake River cutthroat trout in particular is the only subspecies of cutthroat trout that still dominates in its home range - which is one of the reasons the watershed is so important to conserve, protect, and restore.

The Snake Headwaters watershed in Teton County is home to wilderness areas and study areas, roadless areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and other types of protective land management designations. Only 3% of the land in Teton County is private, and of that, about 34% is under the protection of conservation easements. The watershed is primarily federal U.S. Forest Service lands (Bridger-Teton National Forests), composing 61.2% of the total land area, and National Park Service lands (Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks), composing 33.5% of the total land area. The remainder of public land ownership is composed of federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / National Elk Refuge (1.4%), U.S. Bureau of Land Management (0.05%), and State of Wyoming and Teton County (0.5%) lands. Elevations range from 13,775 feet at its highest atop the Grand Teton to about 5,800 feet at its lowest (along the Snake River at Teton County's southern boundary).

The main tributaries draining the watershed from north to south are the Lewis River, Pacific Creek, the Buffalo Fork, Spread Creek, the Gros Ventre River, Flat Creek, Fish Creek, Fall Creek, Hoback River, and Greys River. These streams (except for Flat Creek and Fish Creek) are primarily freestone, snowmelt-dominated tributary streams draining subwatersheds of various sizes. In the valley bottom, there are numerous spring creeks, some of which are influenced by irrigation water dynamics. Jackson Lake and Palisades Reservoir are major storage reservoirs of the Bureau of Reclamation's Upper Snake System managed by the Upper Snake Field Office located in the watershed.

The Town of Jackson is the watershed's only incorporated town. Census-designated places include Alta, Bondurant, Hoback Junction, Kelly, Moose Wilson Road, Rafter J Ranch, South Park, Teton Village, and Wilson. Unincorporated communities include Moran and Moose. Major water uses in the watershed include municipal and domestic water, water storage at Jackson Lake and Palisades Reservoir, agricultural irrigation, golf course irrigation and ski resort snowmaking, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and ecosystem services. Prior to Anglo American settlement, 26 Tribes hunted, fished, and gathered native plants in the region. Since settlement by homesteaders in the late 1800s, Jackson Hole has undergone a dramatic transformation from traditional ranching and agriculture to a major mountain town destination for tourism and the mountain lifestyle receiving over 5 million visitors a year.

Through the Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act of 2009, 13 rivers and 25 separate river segments totaling 414 miles are protected as National Wild and Scenic Rivers, out of recognition of their “free-flowing condition, water quality, and ‘outstandingly remarkable’ ecologic, geologic, fisheries, scenic, recreation, and cultural values.” The rivers and streams in the watershed provide habitat for an ecologically intact assemblage of native fish including Snake River cutthroat trout, bluehead suckers (a Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need), mountain whitefish, longnose and speckled dace, mountain suckers, redband shiners, northern leatherside and Utah chub, and Paiute and mottled sculpin. The Snake River in Teton County is considered a blue-ribbon trout stream by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. According to a [Jackson Hole Clean Water Coalition white paper](#) on water resources, rivers and streams in the watershed are important to the local recreational and tourism economy as well as to the local community. They generate tens of millions of dollars annually and are visited by nearly 100,000 commercially-guided (float fishing, whitewater rafting, and scenic rafting) visitors each year. Recreational uses include rafting, angling, paddle boarding, canoeing, kayaking, scenic floats, tubing, and more.

The membership of SRHWG will represent the full geographic scope of the Snake Headwaters watershed, as described above, by including numerous federal, state, and local agencies, private landowners, water users, recreational guides and outfitters, conservation nonprofits, scientists, business leaders, Tribes, and Latino residents. It also includes downstream water users in the Snake River Plain, who own 96% of water rights (exclusive of established Wyoming rights pre-compact) in the Wyoming portion of the Upper Snake River system, [per Snake River Compact, 1949](#). The efforts TU and SRHWG will undertake to ensure that the watershed group will include stakeholders that represent the full geographic scope of the Snake River watershed are described in Approach (Page 5) and in E.1.1.1. Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity (Page 7). We have chosen to work within the majority of the Snake Headwaters HUC6 watershed area because it is relatively cohesive, encompassing the valley and community of Jackson Hole (and beyond), the mainstem Snake River and major tributaries, and much of the range of native Snake River cutthroat trout.

## **E.1.2. Evaluation Criterion B—Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs**

### ***E.1.2.1. Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues***

The following critical watershed needs or issues have been identified by TU and partners, as well as by the broad group of stakeholders engaged in the three design sessions and kickoff meeting to date.

#### **Water Management**

##### *Management of Water from Jackson Lake Dam*

Jackson Lake, under the purview of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) in Grand Teton National Park, serves as an important reservoir in the Upper Snake River system. Recent concerns around the implications of water management from Jackson Lake Dam to aquatic resources in the Snake River surfaced in fall 2021, prompting collaborative monitoring efforts among agencies, nonprofits, and volunteers. The relatively rapid 2021 ramp-down schedule led to concerns about rapid dewatering and its impact on fish populations, leading to community feedback that highlighted the necessity for improved collaboration, communication, and diverse

stakeholder involvement in discussions about water management between Jackson Lake Dam and Palisades Reservoir.



*Figure 5: Stranded fish inside channel of the Snake after rapid ramp down of Jackson Lake flows.*

The risks to the aquatic ecosystem and need for heightened collaboration were further amplified in spring of 2023, when flows from Jackson Lake Dam into the Snake River were nearly reduced to 50 cubic feet per second (cfs) by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The BOR had determined the flow reductions were necessary to prevent water from leaving the Upper Snake River System at Milner Dam and being in violation of the BOR’s “Zero Flow at Milner” policy intended to protect Upper Basin irrigators’ water rights. Since the minimum flow required to maintain the fishery below the dam and water within the world-famous Oxbow Bend is 280 cfs (per 1980’s WGFD studies), BOR worked with the State of Wyoming and Grand Teton National Park to avert endangering the 4.5-mile stretch of Snake River below the Jackson Dam. This stretch of the Snake River is critical habitat for cutthroat trout, shore birds, wildlife and the bluehead sucker. Although the crisis was averted, it highlighted the vulnerability of the watershed to climate and water supply-related stressors.

### *Consequences of Dewatering and Shifting Water Concerns*

Over the past decade, water quantity in the Snake Headwaters watershed was not a major concern due to favorable snowpack conditions. However, the below-average snowpack and dry conditions in 2021 and 2022 marked a significant shift in water concerns. Forecasts from the 2021 Greater Yellowstone Climate Assessment project warmer temperatures, declining annual snowpack, and earlier runoff, leading to increased seasonal water deficits. These changes will require stakeholders, including various entities like irrigators, municipalities, conservation groups, and recreationalists, to address competing demands for diminishing water resources. Particularly, the Lower Gros Ventre River, often dewatered in low water years downstream of Highway 89, has prompted studies by the National Park Service and TU for potential solutions. Strategies such as improved modeling and forecasting, irrigation efficiency projects, water conservation measures, groundwater recharge, demand management, and drought contingency planning must continue to be explored as potential tools to mitigate the impact of increasing water scarcity in the region.

## **Water Quality & Data**

### *Water Quality*

Water quality issues in the Snake Headwaters watershed encompass various concerns, including elevated *E. coli* concentrations in Fish Creek and Flat Creek, posing risks to recreational activities. A study conducted by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WYDEQ) revealed the presence of heightened *E. coli* levels in these water bodies, surpassing safe thresholds for full-body contact recreational use.

Anthropogenic sources such as dog waste, wastewater, and livestock activities (cattle and horses) contribute to this contamination, highlighting the need for comprehensive watershed management plans. Teton Conservation District (TCD) initiated watershed management plans for Flat Creek in 2019 and is currently in the process of developing a similar water quality-focused plan for Fish Creek, aiming to identify and address these pollution sources.

Furthermore, sedimentation, temperature fluctuations, nutrient pollution, and the proliferation of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) pose significant threats to aquatic life, habitats, and drinking water quality across the watershed. Sediment, a common water pollutant, negatively impacts fish habitats, alters stream hydrology, and disrupts recreational activities, especially in areas lacking riparian vegetation or experiencing runoff from roads. Additionally, the rise in stream temperatures, observed in 2021 where the Snake River in Moose, WY, and Fish Creek exceeded 70°F, poses stress to aquatic species by reducing oxygen levels. These warmer temperatures, influenced by both human activities and climate change, significantly affect the well-being of trout, known to thrive in cooler waters below 65°F, with 70°F being notably stressful. Addressing these multifaceted water quality issues necessitates integrated management strategies and proactive measures to preserve the health and resilience of the watershed ecosystem. Figure 8 below provides a TCD analysis of water temperatures in the Snake River and tributaries in 2021 that highlight conditions known to be stressful to fish and aquatic health.



Figure 6: JH Clean Water Coalition sign urging public awareness of and action on E. coli.

High levels of nutrients and higher water temperatures fuel aquatic plant and algal growth in waterbodies; when this vegetation dies and decays it decreases the available oxygen in the water thus harming fish and other aquatic organisms. Nutrient pollution in the form of elevated nitrogen and phosphorus levels are known to be a growing cause of concern in the Snake Headwaters watershed in the Jackson Hole area, for humans as well as aquatic species and has spurred community action through the Jackson Hole Clean Water Coalition and Teton County Comprehensive Water Quality Master Planning process.



Figure 7: Nutrient pollution in Fish Creek.

Notably, the community of Hoback Junction does not currently have reliable access to safe drinking water. Wastewater, septic systems, and agricultural and grazing runoff are known contributors of nutrient pollution to watersheds.

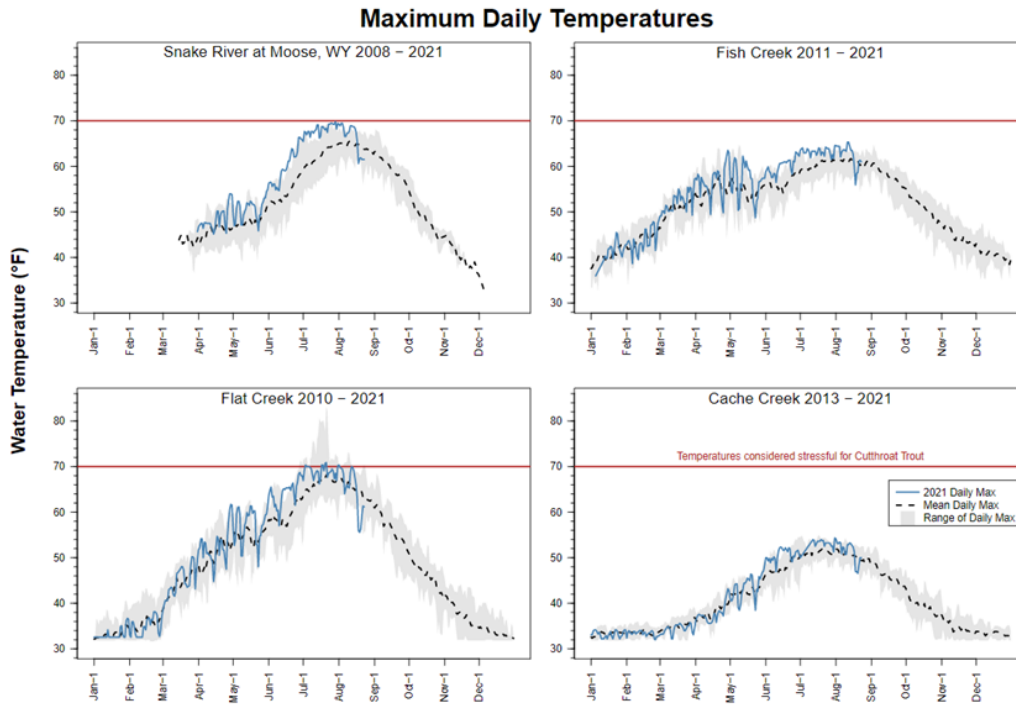


Figure 8: A TCD analysis of water temperatures in the Snake River and tributaries in 2021 show conditions that are known to be stressful to fish and aquatic health.

### Data and Monitoring

While there is a wealth of data being collected by diverse agencies, organizations, academic institutions, and the University of Wyoming across the watershed, it is not easily accessible or able to be analyzed to observe if changes from baseline conditions are occurring. There is a need to centralize available data and make it more accessible and digestible by managers and the public to be able to track ecosystem changes and declines and facilitate proactive management strategies in response to observed changes. In addition, a comprehensive monitoring plan to guide water quality and quantity-related collection efforts is needed.

### Ecosystems & Habitat

#### *Aquatic, Riparian, and Wetland Habitat Degradation*

Several organizations, notably Trout Unlimited (TU), have undertaken significant efforts to restore native fish populations and preserve watershed health, focusing on critical zones like the Snake River mainstem. Identified as a crucial area for conserving native aquatic species, the Snake River mainstem serves as a vital habitat for the native Snake River cutthroat trout and bluehead suckers, emphasizing its significance for conservation efforts. However, habitat degradation persists due to multiple factors, including the impact of the Snake River Levee System, traditional flood irrigation methods posing risks of native fish entrainment and reduced instream flows, and threats from Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) has categorized these areas as high-priority zones for aquatic restoration and connectivity, acknowledging the need for active conservation measures.

Over the past few years, TU has spearheaded restoration projects and partnership initiatives in the Snake Headwaters watershed, focusing on areas crucial for native cutthroat trout populations.



These endeavors aim to address various challenges, such as fish habitat restoration, fish passage, and watershed health. TU's commitment to large-scale collaborative projects in the region has forged strong relationships with agency partners and private landowners and positioned TU as a trusted convener of the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group (SRHWG), emphasizing the collective resolve to preserve and restore the watershed's ecological balance. However, there is a need for more collaborative projects to be identified, prioritized, and implemented. Projects must also take into account recreational and economic considerations, which would be made possible through a future Integrated Watershed Management Plan by the SRHWG.

### *Entrainment*

Irrigation practices in Teton County have historically relied heavily on flood irrigation methods, serving not only traditional ranch lands but also extending to golf courses and other amenity water features. The migration patterns of native fish, like the Snake River cutthroat, across various habitat types during different life stages expose them to risks of being carried into irrigation ditches, causing entrapment and significant population loss. Collaborative efforts by WGFD, GTNP, and TU have conducted fish rescues towards the end of the irrigation season in the County's various irrigation ditches, shedding light on fish losses numbering tens of thousands annually. A focused trap net study on the Granite Supplemental Ditch, diverting approximately 400 cfs of water from the Snake River near Moose, revealed considerable entrainment levels. Deploying fish screens, enabling water passage into irrigation ditches while safeguarding fish through a bypass mechanism, stands as a strategic measure to mitigate entrainment concerns.



*Figure 9: Volunteers participate in a fish rescue operation at the end of the irrigation season.*

### *Loss of Stream Function from Levees and Channelization*

The Snake River Levee System, established in the 1950s and 1960s to curb flood risks, has emerged as a notable contributor to the degradation of the Snake River mainstem in Teton



*Figure 10: Levee confinement and associated floodplain disconnection along the Snake River*

County. These levees, designed for flood protection, have confined the river within a significantly diminished floodplain area compared to its historical extent. This confinement disrupts the river's natural dynamics, affecting seasonal wetlands, riparian habitats, flood attenuation, nutrient exchange, and the overall quality of spring creek habitats. The channelization within the levees has exacerbated water velocity and erosive forces, leading to adverse effects such as downcutting within the levees, aggradation, and instability

downstream of these modified river sections. The resulting alterations in the river's course, combined with the impacts of system water management between Jackson Lake and Palisades Reservoir, contribute to the loss of essential riparian zones and wetland habitats.

## **Development & Recreation**

### *Development*

Teton County, one of Wyoming's fastest-growing regions, experienced an 8.4 percent growth rate from 2010 to 2018, significantly higher than the statewide average of 2.5 percent. Despite only 3% of the county's land being privately owned, substantial development occurs in critical areas like valley bottoms, historical floodplains, and along the Snake River and its tributaries. This development surge exerts immense pressure on these ecosystems. While subject to the regulations outlined in the Jackson and Teton County Comprehensive Plan's Land Development Regulations, new or redeveloped areas face challenges in maintaining ecosystem balance. Such challenges stem from activities like building in flood-prone regions, the removal of essential riparian vegetation, infrastructure development that disrupts aquatic passages, and practices like pond construction and land management, all of which contribute to water pollution, quality, and habitat degradation.

The rapid expansion in Teton County poses notable concerns for water resources, including potential repercussions on water quality, quantity, and habitat. The surge in development has amplified issues related to infrastructure growth and shifts in land use practices. Construction activities within floodplains, installation of new infrastructure, and certain land management approaches wield significant influence over the area's water bodies. These actions pose threats to water quality and quantity by interfering with natural waterways and habitat integrity.

### *Recreation*

River recreation in the Snake River Headwaters serves as a crucial economic driver and a cherished aspect of local culture. The natural landscapes, including the Snake River and its tributaries, attract numerous enthusiasts for activities such as fishing, kayaking, rafting, and wildlife watching. However, this surge in recreational interest also brings forth potential ecological impacts. Increased human traffic along riverbanks and waterways can exert stress on fragile ecosystems, potentially leading to habitat disruption, soil erosion, and the introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS). AIS pose significant threats to native flora and fauna, disrupting the delicate ecological balance. To counter these risks, various stakeholders actively engage in education and outreach programs, advocating responsible recreation practices and fostering environmental stewardship among enthusiasts. Apart from its ecological implications, river recreation plays a pivotal role in the local economy. The economic vitality stemming from river-related activities underlines the significance of preserving the health and integrity of these water bodies.

## **Climate & Resiliency**

Climate change predictions indicate a warmer, drier future, prompting a need for increased ecosystem resilience. There is increasing concern from land, water, and fisheries managing agencies as well as the Jackson Hole community that climate change is already in the process of bringing about substantive changes to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, with likely deleterious effects to aquatic habitat, recreational resources, agriculture, and municipal water supplies. As mentioned above, climate models predict a warmer, drier future with scarcer water resources, which is likely to only exacerbate demand and competition for water from different user groups. In addition to innovative tools for water management and efficiency, managers are also seeking information and resources for other ways to increase ecosystem resiliency, to ensure

that the health of the Snake Headwaters watershed remains protected into the future. Projects that reconnect streams to their floodplains, restore wet meadows, mimic beaver activity, recharge aquifers, and restore wetlands, all serve to retain water in the watershed longer and increase base flows during the warmest parts of the year. Projects that remove fish passage barriers and eliminate entrainment ensure that native fish are able to migrate to thermal refugia and other key habitat during critical times of the year.

**E.1.2.2. Sub-criterion No. B2. Project Benefits**

Through a collaborative design process, the watershed group actively involved all participants in shaping its purpose, principles, goals, and structure. Over the past year, three design sessions and a kickoff meeting engaged 85 unique participants. This group worked together to identify major issues and opportunities in the watershed as highlighted in the E.1.2.1. Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues section starting on Page 11 and as represented by Figure 10 below. These were synthesized and categorized – informing the creation of the four Working Groups.

The structure of the group now consists of the full general membership, four working groups focused on priority project areas, the steering committee representing the various stakeholder sectors, and the watershed group coordinator who will serve as the facilitator.

The ongoing commitment to prioritize diverse representation extends to targeted outreach and inclusion efforts aimed at engaging the Latino and Tribal communities connected to the watershed. By ensuring a diverse spectrum of voices, the group aims to address the intricate needs of the entire network more effectively, striving for greater balance and inclusivity.

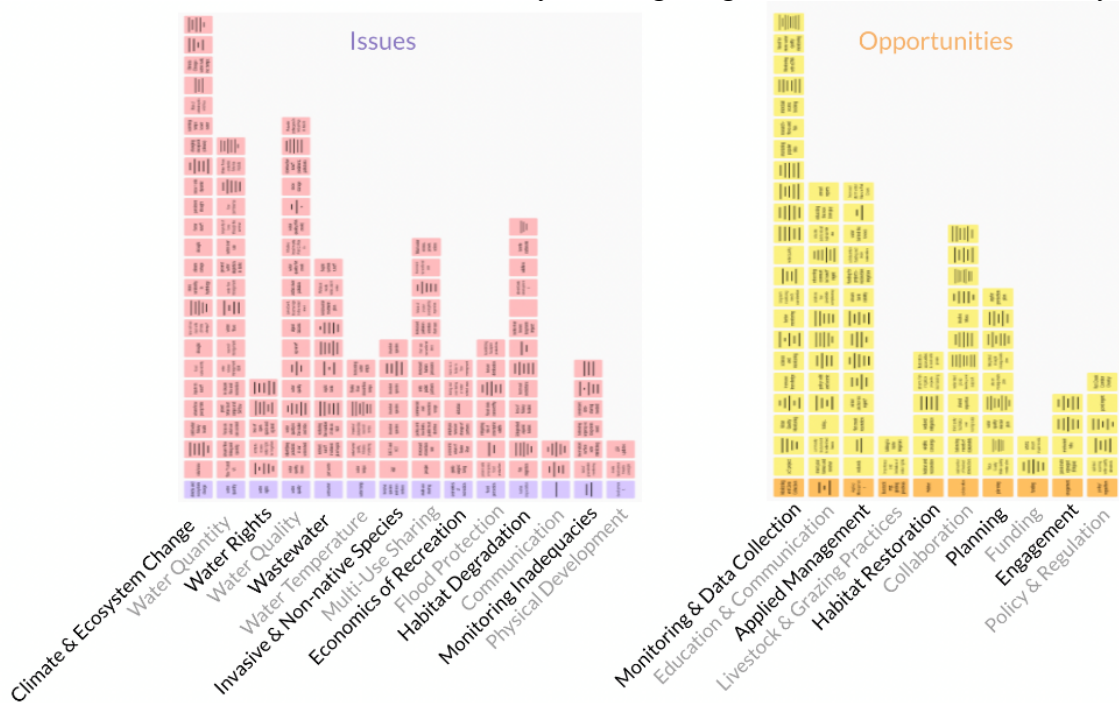


Figure 11: A visual representation of the Issues and Opportunities within the watershed as identified by stakeholders during the watershed group design process.

### **Expected Benefits from the Watershed Group:**

The Snake River Headwaters is a cornerstone of the local culture and regional economy – supporting direct and indirect recreation values of scenery, photography, wildlife tourism, rafting, fishing, kayaking and being one of the major draws to the region. There are over 400 miles of designated Wild & Scenic Rivers throughout the watershed. Additionally, the watershed supports extensive agricultural production in the valley and downstream onto the Snake River Plain. Activities in the Snake Headwaters affect many people downriver. As one of the last and most intact coldwater fisheries in the lower 48, the Snake Headwaters is a key ecosystem for supporting Snake River Cutthroat Trout and other coldwater species. There is a great deal of passion for this landscape and the waterways across it, and this passion can escalate into conflict. By bringing together stakeholders representing all sectors and interest areas, this group will improve communication and collective management of this shared and valuable resource.

The steering committee's diverse representation from major stakeholder sectors in the region will ensure effective attention to sector-specific concerns and opportunities. Improved communication across agencies and with the public will enhance informed decision-making and educate stakeholders about underlying decision drivers. Regular full-group meetings, newsletters, and a comprehensive mailing list will foster wider dissemination of events, information sessions, concerns, and opportunities. Additionally, both virtual and in-person meetings will provide avenues for informal networking, fostering trust-building among watershed members.

The four working groups - Water Management & Flow, Data & Monitoring, Ecosystems, and Outreach and Community – will collectively address issues identified in the previous section. As we begin the early stages of these groups, some examples of potential focus areas brainstormed during the October 2023 kickoff meeting are included below. This is a preliminary and draft list and is not intended to be comprehensive. However, it provides an indication of how watershed group activities seek to address the issues identified above and their anticipated benefits.

### **Water Management & Flows**

1. Collaborate to Protect Minimum Flows from Jackson Lake Dam and Understand Ramping Rate Impacts –Bring information, research, tools, and resources to the table to support collaborative efforts by water managers to maintain minimum instream flows for the aquatic ecosystem and manage ramping rates to reduce identified impacts to fisheries.
2. Multi-Jurisdiction Educational Resources: Organize presentations, documents and other resources from Idaho and Wyoming representatives, particularly focusing on sharing insights about water management, water supply forecasts research to inform water management (such as the upcoming Idaho State University-led Jackson Lake Dam ramp down study), jurisdictional roles and responsibilities, and pertinent legal frameworks. These resources will aim to enhance understanding and knowledge sharing among the group members, decision-makers, and the broader public.
3. BOR Basin Study: Provide stakeholder engagement and input to pursue and guide a future BOR WaterSMART Basin Study focused on evaluating water supply and demand and helping to ensure reliable water supplies into the future.
4. Collaborative Framework Input: Encourage and support continued collaboration, coordination, and communication between BOR, Grand Teton National Park, and State of

Wyoming agencies to proactively manage flows. Provide a community-based nexus to support and provide feedback on water management decisions.

### **Data & Monitoring**

1. **Data Dashboard Development:** Work towards a comprehensive public-facing Data Dashboard for the watershed to increase data accessibility for water quantity and quality data, with an emphasis on long-term, continuous, instantaneous data that support informed decision-making and public engagement. Complete a comprehensive inventory of existing data collection efforts by agencies, nonprofits, and research institutions to guide the development of the data dashboard.
2. **Comprehensive Monitoring Plan:** Compile areas of inquiry for baseline monitoring, data collection, and research to inform and guide future efforts and develop a comprehensive monitoring plan for water quality data that builds on and implements recommendations from the Teton County Water Quality Master Plan.
3. **Stakeholder Input into Existing Efforts:** Engage the SRHWG in providing stakeholder input requested by the Teton County Water Quality Master Plan, University of Wyoming's Wyoming Anticipating the Climate Transition, and Henry's Fork Foundation's ongoing research and monitoring projects.

### **Ecosystems**

1. **Dissemination of the Water Quality Master Plan:** Use the SRHWG network to effectively share and distribute the Water Quality Master Plan within our community. Identify actionable items to help implement the plan's goals.
2. **Cottonwood Regeneration:** Document and engage in projects geared towards the regeneration and safeguarding of cottonwood trees in our ecosystem, including addressing the ecological impacts of the Snake River levee system.
3. **Fish Passage and Stream Restoration Projects:** Identify opportunities for SRHWG involvement in native fish passage and stream restoration projects. Share best practices and recent project examples to spur new project ideas.

### **Outreach & Community Engagement**

1. **Comprehensive Outreach Strategy:** Create a strategy for effective communication to stakeholders and the public about SRHWG activities and watershed issues and opportunities. This involves increasing awareness about the Teton County Water Quality Master Plan (WQMP), aiming for the adoption of the Flat Creek Corridor Overlay in the next 12 months, enhancing AIS awareness among Snake River recreationists, and organizing training sessions for scientists and data managers to make findings accessible to the general public.
2. **Engagement of Underrepresented Groups:** As the group continues to expand outreach to stakeholders and community members, focus efforts on engagement of regional Tribal communities and Latino residents.

#### **E.1.3. Evaluation Criterion C—Readiness to Proceed**

The proposed scope of work is detailed above in Approach (Page 5). The table below describes key activities, milestones, estimated start and end dates for each activity/milestone, responsible entity, and estimated costs. If awarded funding, SRHWG is primed for a successful

and early launch. SRHWG has spent 2023 preparing to move forward aggressively with support from BOR. The nascent watershed group has 205 members from 114 organizations, and has determined its goals, mission, principals, and structure. SRHWG has established four working groups to move forward with watershed solutions and research. LWG, a neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitation team, is ready to commence a robust suite of activities as a subrecipient. SRHWG will hit the ground running. With support from BOR, the watershed group will initiate a robust stakeholder and community outreach process, including to marginalized community members and Tribes, coordinate and facilitate on-going regular / full, steering committee, and work group meetings, and take pre-planning steps towards an integrated watershed restoration plan. There are no new policies or administrative actions required to implement the plan or project being designed.

Activity	Milestone	Start	End	Lead	Direct Cost
<i>Activity 1: Stakeholder and Community Outreach and Input</i>					\$92,528
Website Establishment	Live website with translation software	3/1/25	6/30/25	LWG	\$7,840
Marketing Materials	Distribution of branded materials	1/1/25	5/31/25	LWG	\$10,600
E-Newsletter and Email Communications	Quarterly e-newsletter and regular email communications	6/1/25	11/30/27	LWG	\$17,960
Community Event Participation/Public Meetings	Table at community events / organize one annual public meeting	5/1/25	9/30/27	LWG	\$15,720
Advertisement in Local Media	Advertisements for public meetings	5/1/25	9/30/27	TU	\$7,568
Engagement Events	One engagement event per year co-hosted with stakeholders	6/1/25	9/30/27	TU	\$3,500
Procure Translation Services	Contract with a translation service	1/1/25	5/31/25	TU	\$3,500
Collaboration with Voices JH to Increase Stakeholder Diversity	Signed MOU with Voices JH	1/1/25	6/30/25	TU	\$16,000
Tribal Engagement	Travel stipends and visiting Tribes	3/1/25	11/30/27	TU	\$9,840
<i>Activity 2: Coordination of Regular SRHWG and Steering Committee Meetings</i>					\$80,083
Year 1 Coordination	Logistics, facilitation, action items, and Steering Committee Oversight	1/1/25	12/31/25	LWG	\$26,547

Year 2 Coordination	Logistics, facilitation, action items, and Steering Committee Oversight	1/1/26	12/31/26	LWG	\$26,690
Year 3 Coordination	Logistics, facilitation, action items, and Steering Committee Oversight	1/1/27	11/30/27	LWG	\$26,846
<i>Activity 3: Coordination and Facilitating Regular Working Group Meetings to Advance Knowledge Exchange and Projects</i>					\$86,370
Year 1 Coordination	Logistics, facilitation, information exchange, action items	3/1/25	11/30/27	LWG	\$28,470
Year 2 Coordination	Logistics, facilitation, information exchange, action items	3/1/25	11/30/27	LWG	\$28,790
Year 3 Coordination	Logistics, facilitation, information exchange, action items	3/1/25	11/30/27	LWG	\$29,110
<i>Activity 4: Pre-planning for a Future Stakeholder-driven Watershed Restoration Plan</i>					\$21,960
Research and Benchmarking	Complete study of successful watershed management plans	1/1/26	08/30/26	TU	\$6,000
Identifying Key Elements	Define essential components of a future IWMP	9/1/26	1/30/27	TU	\$4,000
Stakeholder Engagement	Stakeholder outreach to shape and refine plan's elements and directions	2/1/27	6/30/27	LWG	\$ 9,880
Contractor Requirements and Budget Drafting	Determine resources necessary for an IWMP	7/1/27	11/30/27	TU	\$2,080
<b>Total Costs (Does not include Indirect Costs)</b>					<b>\$280,941</b>

#### **E.1.4. Evaluation Criterion D—Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities**

##### ***E.1.4.1. Climate Change***

Climate change and mitigating its impacts on the water supply and region are spurring the establishment of the new watershed group. The impacts of climate change are just beginning, but SRHWG already understands the risks it poses to the Snake River Headwaters and the communities and wildlife that depend upon clean and stable water sources. As discussed below in the section on disadvantaged communities, the region is already at significant risk because of wildfire, flooding, and population and economic impacts due to natural hazards. As the climate continues to warm, the region will see an extended fire season, decreased snow fall, and increased severity of drought, creating conditions that are ripe for catastrophic wildfires and negative ecological effects that will have cascading ecological impacts to the area's world-renown natural resources. Climate change will also lead to a significant level of variability in the

weather and occasional increased precipitation that will elevate the risk of flooding, which is already significant. It will affect the recreation and tourism economy.

The risk to water supplies, ecosystem, economy, and community posed by climate change was exemplified in the spring 2023 Jackson Lake Dam flow crisis, described above in section E.1.2.1., Critical Watershed Needs or Issues, on Page 12. Although the crisis was averted, Snake River flows continue to be a high priority for the Department of the Interior, as evidenced by an interview with former Deputy Secretary of the Interior Tommy Beaudreau in the Jackson Hole News and Guide, as well as a listening session with community stakeholders (including many SRHWG steering committee members) in July 2023 that the Deputy Secretary hosted together with BOR Commissioner Camille Touton that included many SRHWG steering committee members.

The SRHWG's partnership structure, stakeholders, and outreach and education campaign will lay the framework to identify climate change impacts and collaborative solutions to address them. Increased communication and coordination among stakeholders are likely to lead to future on-the-ground projects and management recommendations for increased climate resiliency. Aquatic habitat restoration projects may be identified by the SRHWG that increase floodplain connectivity and retain water on the landscape longer, strengthening water supply sustainability. Fish passage projects that replace undersized culverts and other aging infrastructure allow native fish to move to thermal refugia, spawning habitat, overwintering habitat, and away from environmental catastrophes, while also making stream and road crossings more resilient to flooding. Improved data sharing, monitoring, and research efforts may provide important information to water managers as they seek to balance complex demands from water users with ecosystem impacts.

The project will also partner with the University of Wyoming's WyACT (Wyoming Anticipating Climate Transitions) as it establishes novel and innovative capacity for addressing the ecological and socioeconomic consequences of climate-driven changes in water resources in the Upper Basin Snake River. Funded by a \$20 million National Science Foundation grant, the University of Wyoming is working with local communities to understand how climate change will affect streamflows, aquatic ecosystems and vegetation, as well as the river runners, anglers, farmers and ranchers who depend on them. Integrating the work of the collaborative and data driven SRHWG with WyACT, who serves on the steering committee and several working groups, as well as is invested in the proposed data dashboard project, will amplify the success of both programs, creating synergies that will allow rapid implementation of projects to increase resiliency in the Snake River Headwaters Watershed.

#### ***E.1.4.2. Benefits to Disadvantaged, Underserved, and Tribal Communities***

##### **Disadvantaged and Underserved Community Benefits:**

The watershed's estimated population is 32,177 residents and is comprised of sparsely populated communities outside of Jackson and Teton County. The entire watershed is highly vulnerable to natural hazards and the vast majority of its residents lack resources to recover following inevitable natural disasters.



While Teton County (population 22,330) and the Town of Jackson (population 10,760) are famous for a resort lifestyle, income disparities and lack of housing affordability has caused continuous workforce attrition and will cause largescale displacement of residents following natural disasters. Jackson is the only incorporated municipality in Teton County. Jackson and Teton County are the most unequal metro area in the country, with luxury second (or third or fourth) homeownership driving up costs of living in a hospitality- and tourism-economy supported by low-wage workers who struggle to make ends meet. According to the 2016-2021 American Community Survey (ACS), 31% of Jackson households make under \$50,000 a year, while in 2022, the median single family home sale in Jackson was \$2,912,500 and the median sale of a townhouse was \$1,116,500. Rent for a two-bedroom unit was \$2,932. Residents who devote a significant portion of income to housing have limited abilities bolster their savings, leaving them with few choices following floods or fires. Jackson's Latino households comprise 20% of the total population, of which 12.3% of all households are considered linguistically isolated. Teton County's Latino population makes up 15.6% of its residents, of which 5% speak English less than well. According to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST Tool), residents of Teton County, as compared other United States residents, are in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for expected population loss due to fatalities and injuries from natural hazards; the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile for expected building loss from natural hazards; the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile for flooding; and 80<sup>th</sup> for properties at risk from wildfires. The County has one or more abandoned mines.

The watershed includes Sublette County's Census Tract 56035000101 which has a population of 3,381. According to the CEJST Tool, Sublette County, WY is in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for expected population loss due to fatalities and injuries from natural hazards; the 83<sup>rd</sup>, percentile for expected building loss from natural hazards; the 76<sup>th</sup> percentile for flooding; and 87<sup>th</sup> for properties at risk from wildfires. Residents are vulnerable to natural disasters since the Census Tract ranks in the 84<sup>th</sup> percentile for residents over the age of 64 and in the 64<sup>th</sup> percentile for residents that are unemployed (USEPA EJ Screen). Lincoln County Census Tract 56023978002 is included in the watershed and has 3,878 residents. The County is in the in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for expected population loss due to fatalities and injuries from natural hazards; 83<sup>rd</sup> percentile for expected agriculture loss rate from natural hazards; the 81<sup>st</sup> percentile for flooding; and 74<sup>th</sup> for properties at risk from wildfires. The County has one or more abandoned mines. Its residents will struggle to recover from natural disasters since its ranks in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for residents over the age of 64 and 89<sup>th</sup> percentile for lacking health insurance (US EPA EJ Screen). Finally, the watershed includes Fremont County's Census Tract 56013000400, which has 1,360 residents. According to the CEJST Tool, Fremont County, WY is in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for expected population loss due to fatalities and injuries from natural hazards; the 93<sup>rd</sup> percentile for expected building loss from natural hazards; the 84<sup>th</sup> percentile for flooding; the 87<sup>th</sup> for properties at risk from wildfires, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for energy costs, and 91<sup>st</sup> for homes without indoor kitchen or plumbing. The County has one or more abandoned mines. Residents are vulnerable to natural disasters since the Census Tract ranks in the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile for residents over the age of 64 and in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for residents that are unemployed (USEPA EJ Screen).

While the CEJST Tool does not classify the watershed as a disadvantaged or historically underserved community, all the residents in the watershed are at extreme risk from natural disaster, including flooding and wildfire. The project will pull together diverse stakeholders to improve watershed health and resiliency into the future, allowing communities to reduce risk

from flooding, improve water quality, and ensure stable water supplies to support the recreation, tourism and agriculture-based economy – as well as protecting low-income, Latino, and elderly residents that lack the resources to recover from flooding or wildfires. To integrate these often marginalized voices, SRHWG will partner with Voices JH to undertake culturally relevant and meaningful public outreach including conducting a Spanish-language focus group and paid interviews.

**Tribal Benefits:**

The watershed lies outside of existing Tribal lands but includes the ancestral and seasonal migration lands of 26 Tribes that are connected with the southern portion of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The nearest Tribal Nations are the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes located on the Fort Hall Reservation in Southeastern Idaho (129 miles), and the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes located on the Wind River Indian Reservation in central Wyoming (about 144 miles).

Due to the deep historical connections of existing Tribes to the lands within the watershed, TU and the SRHWG are integrating significant and meaningful outreach to Tribes and Indigenous-lead interest groups. This outreach began in summer 2023 through phone calls and emails to staff and members of the Shoshone-Bannock, Eastern Shoshone, and Northern Arapaho Tribes. The feedback received was that there was interest in the watershed’s health and resiliency as well as participating in future SRHWG meetings, but limited bandwidth to attend the design phase meetings. This preliminary outreach was further built upon through participation by TU and agency partners with the Jackson Hole InterTribal Gathering (JHITG) in October of 2023. The two-day event included Tribal, agency, and nonprofit representatives with a connection to the southern Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, and focused on regional agency updates, equitable co-stewardship & co-management, best practices for robust collaboration, and supporting Tribal interests. SRHWG understands that there are significant barriers to meaningfully engage the members of the Shoshone-Bannock, Eastern Shoshone, and Northern Arapaho Tribes. Through the above-identified outreach process and future participation events such as the Gathering, the SRHWG will provide Tribes and Indigenous-led interest groups with an opportunity to share their vision for the landscape’s future and be a partner in future watershed implementation projects. The SRHWG will also provide travel stipends for Tribal members and travel to Tribal reservations, meeting people where they live. In addition, the University of Wyoming’s WyACT project is working closely with the Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes in the Wind River basin, and as a steering committee member is committed to helping the SRHWG cultivate and strengthen Tribal involvement.

**D.2.2.3. Project Budget**

**Table 1. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources**

<b>FUNDING SOURCES</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Non-Federal Entities</b>	\$0
<b>Non-Federal Subtotal</b>	\$0
<b>REQUESTED RECLAMATION FUNDING</b>	\$299,189

<b>Summary</b>			
Figures in this summary table are calculated from entries made in subsequent categories, only blank white cells require data entry.			
6. Budget Object Category	Total Cost	Federal Estimated Amount	Non-Federal Estimated Amount
a. Personnel	\$59,600		
b. Fringe Benefits	\$5,483		
c. Travel	\$0		
d. Equipment	\$0		
e. Supplies	\$9,000		
f. Contractual	\$192,590		
g. Construction	\$0		
h. Other Direct Costs	\$14,268		
i. Total Direct Costs	\$280,941		
i. Indirect Charges	\$18,248		
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$299,189</b>	<b>\$299,189</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Cost Share Percentage</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>

**Budget Narrative**

The budget proposal above does not include any project costs that may be incurred prior to award. This grant is expected to leverage significant in-kind match in the form of staff time from TU and other steering committee member organizations. However, for the purposes of our grant application, we are not planning to include cost share in the budget.

**Salaries and Wages**

The project manager is Leslie Steen, TU’s Wyoming State Director. TU is not requesting funding support to cover the Wyoming State Director’s salary. Rather, funds from the BOR grant will support a soon-to-be hired, part-time, TU senior staff’s time who will assist the project manager in the performance of all tasks for each budget year, including administering the CWMP grant; supporting the contracted facilitation team; assisting with communications and outreach; conducting background research in support of working groups and pre-planning for the Integrated Watershed Management Plan; GIS support; and participating in the watershed group and working groups. As mentioned above, we envision a hybrid management approach where TU oversees and manages the CWMP grant and is heavily engaged in its implementation, but the LWG facilitation team is tasked with many of the activities that would benefit from a neutral 3rd party or other outside expertise. We estimate 10 hours per quarter to be spent on compliance with reporting requirements, including final financial and performance reports. We estimate a 3% increase in labor rates per year. We certify that the labor rates included in the budget proposal are within the hiring range rates for the identified position and are consistently applied to Federal and non-Federal activities.

TU Senior Staff Y1: 400 hours x \$48 = \$19,200, split among Activities 1 (10%), 2 (25%), 3 (40%), and 4 (25%).

TU Senior Staff Y2: 400 hours x \$50 = \$19,800, split among Activities 1 (10%), 2 (25%), 3 (40%), and 4 (25%).

TU Senior Staff Y3: 400 hours x \$52 = \$20,600, split among Activities 1 (10%), 2 (25%), 3 (40%), and 4 (25%).

### **Fringe Benefits**

TU's current fringe costs for part-time employees working less than 30 hours a week is 9.2% for payroll taxes. Part-time employees do not receive any other fringe benefits.

### **Travel**

N/a. Any travel costs associated with TU's management of the CWMP grant and involvement in its implementation will be covered in-kind.

### **Equipment**

N/A.

### **Supplies and Materials**

Funds from the grant will be used for watershed group and public meeting materials (printing, office supplies, refreshments) and marketing materials (brochures, stickers, banners, tablecloth, pop-up tent, etc). The basis of cost for printing, office supplies, and refreshments are based on actual costs from a previous project. The basis of cost for brochures, stickers, banners, tablecloth, and pop-up tent are based on actual costs from a previous project and online vendor published prices.

### **Contractual/Construction**

Funds from the grant will be used to contract with vendors for the following services, with basis of cost as follows and procurement plan as follows. These contracts are necessary for the project to create a visual identity for the new watershed group and to ensure the diversity of stakeholder participation.

- 1) Latino outreach and engagement implementation
  - a. Basis of cost: estimate from similar scope of work contracted by Town of Jackson
  - b. Contractor: Voices JH. Sole source contracting because they are the only vendor that specializes in survey and engagement of underrepresented populations in Jackson Hole.
- 2) Designing a logo and branding
  - a. Basis of cost: estimate from Star Valley Watershed Group's similar scope of work
  - b. Selected by following TU's procurement policy for small purchases, including getting three cost estimates
- 3) Translation of communications materials into Spanish
  - a. Basis of cost: estimate of \$50/hour and 50 hours
  - b. Selected by following TU's procurement policy for micro purchases

Funds from this grant will be used for TU to enter into a subrecipient agreement with LegacyWorks Group (LWG) to carry out the tasks and activities outlined above. The reasons for

needing to hire an experienced 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitation team rather than facilitating the new watershed group “in-house” are further described above in Goals (Page 4) and Approach (Page 5). Facilitation team tasks are expected to include but are not limited to: Communications content creation; website establishment and maintenance; email newsletters and communications; public meeting coordination & community outreach events; watershed group network support; full watershed group meetings facilitation and support; steering committee meetings and annual elections coordination and committee member communications; working group meetings facilitation and support; Integrated Watershed Management Plan pre-planning; and associated administrative tasks. A detailed estimate provided by LWG is included in the following table and is based on an average hourly rate of \$140:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Total</b>
Communications Content Creation	Content and coordination for communications materials, promotional materials	40	\$5,600
Website Establishment and Maintenance	Set up and maintain a Squarespace site for the watershed group, including posting resources for knowledge exchange	46	\$6,440
Email Newsletters and Communications	Quarterly newsletter summarizing updates, opportunities, information, schedules, news. Email updates as needed.	114	\$15,960
Public Meeting & Community Outreach Events	Coordination and facilitation of one public meeting a year. Coordination of other community outreach activities.	98	\$13,720
Watershed Group Network Support	Listserve moderating, adding members, outreach. Direct conversations with partners and new members	70	\$9,800
Full Watershed Group Meetings Facilitation/Support	Quarterly 2 hour meetings (12 quarters). Meeting preparation, facilitation, synthesis, follow ups, scheduling, materials preparation.	214.5	\$30,030
Steering Committee Meetings, Annual Elections, Committee Member Communications	Quarterly 2 hour meetings (12 quarters). Meeting preparation, facilitation, synthesis, follow ups, scheduling, materials preparation.	195	\$27,300
Working Group Meetings Facilitation / Support	Support for 4 working groups. Quarterly 1.5 hour meetings per group (12 quarters). Meeting preparation, facilitation, follow ups, scheduling, materials prep	397	\$55,580

Integrated Watershed Management Plan Pre-Planning	Managing stakeholder and community input in the IWMP pre-planning process	42	\$5,880
Admin: Invoicing, contract mgmt, etc.	Standard	27	\$3,780
<b>Total Staff Hours</b>		<b>1243.5</b>	<b>\$174,090</b>

**Construction**

N/a

**Other**

Grant funds will be used for costs associated with the domain, hosting and template for the SRHWG website to establish an online presence for the watershed group and as a clearinghouse for information. Basis of cost are published rates.

Funds will also be used for advertising costs which would include advertisements in the *Jackson Hole News & Guide*, *Buckrail*, and other local resources to promote public meetings and community events where community attendance and participation is desired. Basis of cost are published non-profit rates.

A stipend of \$250/meeting for up to two Tribal representatives is also included in the budget to reduce barriers to participation and offset costs for participating Tribes. It includes an estimated \$150 for mileage and \$100 per diem per trip.

**Indirect Rate**

TU has a federally approved indirect cost rate agreement or NICRA which is 13.84% for FY 24. Per TU’s NICRA, the portion of subawards in excess of \$25,000 is excluded from the Base, so only \$25,000 of the proposed \$174,090 LegacyWorks Group subrecipient award is included in the Base.

**D.2.2.4. Environmental & Cultural Resources Compliance**

As this project is designed to develop a new watershed group and undertake planning activities, no environmental and cultural resources compliance (aside from the Bureau of Reclamation’s Categorical Exclusion Checklist and associated environmental and cultural compliance review) will be necessary for project implementation.

**D.2.2.5. Required Permits or Approvals**

No known permits or approvals are necessary to implement the watershed group development and planning activities proposed in this application. This is because all the tasks are expected to be office, site visit, meeting, or virtually based, and will not involve any earth-disturbing activities or associated impacts to habitat, species, wetlands, surface waters, cultural resources, or invasive species. If permits or approvals are needed for meetings and/or events, TU will secure the required permits/approvals.

**D.2.2.6. Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

Trout Unlimited affirms that no overlap exists between the proposed project and any

other active or anticipated proposals or projects in terms of activities, costs, or commitment of key personnel.

#### **D.2.2.7. Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**

Trout Unlimited affirms that there is no actual or potential conflict of interest with any employees of Trout Unlimited as it relates to this application.

#### **D.2.2.8. Uniform Audit Reporting Statement**

Trout Unlimited was required to submit a Single Audit report for the 2022 fiscal year. The EIN number for Trout Unlimited is 38-1612715 and the Uniform Guidance Audit Report is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.

#### **D.2.2.9. Disclosure of Lobbying**

Trout Unlimited has submitted a completed and signed SF-LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form.

#### **D.2.2.10. Letters of Support**

Please see Appendix A for letters of support from the following stakeholders:

- American Rivers
- Bridger-Teton National Forest
- Fish the Fly Guide Service
- Grand Teton National Park
- Grand Teton National Park Foundation
- Jackson Hole EcoTour Adventures
- Jackson Hole Land Trust
- Protect Our Water Jackson Hole
- Rendezvous River Sports
- Snake River Fund
- Snake River Ranch
- Teton Conservation District
- Teton County
- Town of Jackson
- University of Wyoming Anticipating Climate Transitions (WyACT) Project
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department

#### **D.2.2.11. Official Resolution**

See Appendix B for Trout Unlimited's Official Resolution documents, which include TU's Contract Execution Authority signed by the Board of Trustees Secretary Patsy Ishiyama on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and the Ministerial Delegation of Authority for the "Sustaining the New Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange" proposal signed by CFO Jim Hughey on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. These documents have been pre-approved by the BOR in lieu of a single Official Resolution document.

# Appendix A – Letters of Support





December 1, 2023

To Whom it May Concern at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation,

On behalf of American Rivers, I am writing to convey our enthusiastic support for the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group's (SRHWG) application for a three-year Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I grant to implement important water quality monitoring, education, flow management, and volunteer initiatives in the Snake River Headwaters watershed in northwest Wyoming.

**About American Rivers**

Founded in 1973, American Rivers' mission is to protect wild rivers, restore damaged rivers, and conserve clean water for people and nature. Over the last 50 years, we have protected and restored more than 150,000 miles of rivers across the country through Wild and Scenic River designations, dam removals, other on-the-ground projects, and various advocacy campaigns. We played an instrumental role in getting 415 miles of the Snake River Headwaters added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in 2009.

Not only is the SRHWG's work critical, but conservation organizations, water users, river-dependent businesses; local, state and federal agencies; and other key stakeholders are eager to work together to protect the world-class rivers and streams of the Snake River Headwaters watershed. A three-year WaterSMART grant will go a long way towards making this work possible.

Groups like the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group are needed now more than ever. This WaterSMART application has American Rivers' strongest endorsement, as it will have far-reaching benefits to the immediate watershed while also advancing understanding of protecting Wild and Scenic Rivers nationally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Bosse".

Scott Bosse  
Northern Rockies Regional Director  
[sbosse@americanrivers.org](mailto:sbosse@americanrivers.org)

**File Code:** 2600

**Date:** November 13, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing on behalf of USFS Bridger Teton National Forest to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's (TU) application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This proposal holds great promise for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group, of which our organization is a participating stakeholder.

The Snake Headwaters watershed in Teton County is a dynamic landscape that encompasses portions of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, the Gros Ventre and Teton Wilderness areas, and the community of Jackson Hole. The Forest has a long history of partnering with Trout Unlimited and see this as another opportunity to support proactive and collaborative efforts in the management of natural resources.

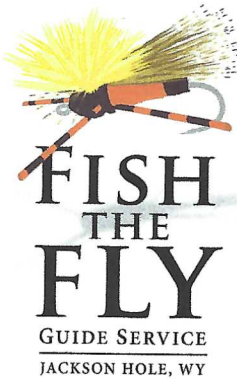
Further, the Bridger Teton National Forest looks forward to being a part of the watershed group. The Forest sees tremendous value in increasing collaborative efforts and communication around water uses, fisheries protection and enhancement, recreation management, and better climate understanding, which seems timely as our 5-year history of snowpack, spring, and summer flows increases in variability.

During this three-year project, Watershed Program Staff plan to be engaged in Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group meetings and contribute to many working groups for the purposes of collaborative benefit. In summary, we support TU's WaterSMART CWMP application because the complex challenges our watershed faces require innovative, collaborative solutions best accomplished by synergy among a diverse coalition of stakeholders and partners with the support of a professional facilitation team.

Sincerely,

*Patrick Barry | SI*

PATRICK BARRY  
Forest Fisheries Biologist, Watershed Program Manager  
Bridger-Teton National Forest



November 30th, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing on behalf of Fish the Fly Guide Service (FTF) to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's (TU) application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This proposal holds great promise for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group (SRHWG), of which our organization is a participating stakeholder.

The proposal, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange", seeks to fortify the new watershed group by facilitating relationship-building among diverse stakeholders, knowledge and data sharing, and engagement with decision-makers and the public. Additionally, it seeks to understand and prioritize critical issues impacting the watershed's long-term health and resilience, while identifying collaborative solutions.

We believe that the SRHWG will be able to help install new monitoring stations in Wyoming and Idaho that record river flow levels, water temperature, and overall water quality. Through collaborative data sharing, this information will be available to the proper agencies to make well-informed decisions on flow regime and infrastructure impacts for all the Snake River communities that rely on it for economic and recreational opportunities in the face of climate change.

FTF has been operating as a fly fishing guide service and scenic float trip operator on the Snake River near Jackson, WY for the past fifteen years. The Upper Snake boasts a rare fishery for native Cutthroat trout that is (mostly) as nature intended it to be. In sharing this resource, we are able to help support a dozen guides and their families each year. We feel that it is our duty to provide a quality experience, while educating our clientele as to the national importance of the Snake River as a natural resource and as a working river sustaining a multi-million dollar agricultural industry.

To date, FTF has attended all four design phase meetings for the SRHWG and also has signed on to the Outreach and Community Engagement Working Group to help unify communities of varying interests around a common resource. We plan on committing approximately fifty hours a year at a rate of \$50 per hour for a total in-kind contribution of \$2500 per year.

We support TU's WaterSMART CWMP application. Without a doubt, the support of a professional facilitation team has been and will continue to be critical in bringing together stakeholders across state lines and a wide array of interests, both public and private.

Sincerely,

Jason Balogh  
Owner – Fish the Fly Guide Service



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK  
P.O. BOX 170  
MOOSE, WY 83012-0170

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
7.A.2 (GRTE)

November 30, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: Commissioner M. Camille Touton  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton:

I am writing on behalf of Grand Teton National Park to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's (TU) application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This proposal holds great promise for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group, of which our organization is a participating stakeholder. As stewards of over 500 square miles of the Snake River headwaters and 40 river miles of the mainstem, the National Park Service (NPS) and Department of Interior is invested in the success of this project to protect and preserve the free-flowing character, water quality, and outstanding values for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The proposal, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange", seeks to fortify the new watershed group by facilitating relationship-building among diverse stakeholders, knowledge and data sharing, and engagement with decision-makers and the public. Additionally, it seeks to understand and prioritize critical issues impacting the watershed's long-term health and resilience, while identifying collaborative solutions.

In 2009 the Snake River Headwaters was designated a national wild and scenic river, because of the spectacular settings, dramatic geologic processes, world-class recreation, critical habitats, and abundant natural and cultural resources. Located at the heart of the largest intact ecosystem in the contiguous United States, the significance of this watershed and its resources cannot be understated. Because of this value – and the complexity of land use and management – a community-based watershed group is necessary to holistically address current and future challenges to watershed health.

During this three-year project, NPS staff plans to be engaged in Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group meetings and working groups for the purposes of holistically addressing current and future issues and management.

In summary, we are grateful to TU for their continued support as a partner, and as we seek to engage and support a collaborative watershed management strategy in the Snake River Headwaters, we strongly support TU's grant WaterSMART CWMP application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chip Jenkins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chip Jenkins  
Superintendent  
Grand Teton National Park  
John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway



# GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

November 27th, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton,

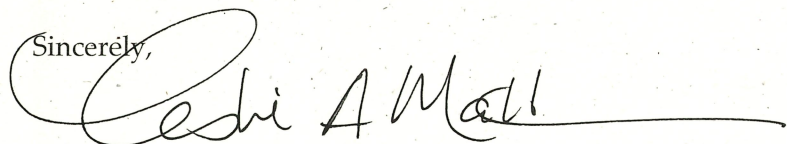
I am writing on behalf of Grand Teton National Park Foundation to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's (TU) application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This proposal holds great promise for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group, of which our organization is a participating stakeholder and supporter.

The proposal, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange", seeks to fortify the new watershed group by facilitating relationship-building among diverse stakeholders, knowledge and data sharing, and engagement with decision-makers and the public. Additionally, it seeks to understand and prioritize critical issues impacting the watershed's long-term health and resilience, while identifying collaborative solutions.

Grand Teton National Park Foundation funds and supports projects that enhance the cultural, historic, and natural resources of Grand Teton National Park and fosters stewardship and appreciation of all that is special in the park. The unique relationship between the Foundation and the park, now in its third decade, continues to flourish. From the alpine glaciers to the river bottoms in the park, the impacts of climate change on natural and cultural resources, visitation, and park management are evident. A focus on climate resiliency is critical to the long term protection and stewardship of the park. The Foundation supports a suite of annual grants to Grand Teton National Park, including a project focused specifically on the Snake River: Tracking Snake River Health and Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources. Throughout 2023, Ryan participated in all of the planning meetings leading up to establishment of the working group. During this three-year project, Ryan Kelly will continue to be engaged in Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group meetings and working groups.

In summary, we support TU's WaterSMART CWMP application because the complex challenges our watershed faces require innovative, collaborative solutions best accomplished by bringing together a broad coalition of stakeholders with the support of a professional facilitation team.

Sincerely,



Leslie A. Mattson  
President, Grand Teton National Park Foundation





## Jackson Hole EcoTour Adventures

*Wilderness, Connection, Sustainability*

www.JHEcoTourAdventures.com

(307) 690-9533

P.O. Box 10872 Jackson, WY 83002

December 1st, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation

Water Resources and Planning Office Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner

Mail Code: 86-6300

P.O. Box 25007

Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing on behalf of JH EcoTour Adventures to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's (TU) application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This proposal holds great promise for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group, of which our organization is a participating stakeholder.

The proposal, "Sustaining the New Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange", seeks to fortify the new watershed group by facilitating relationship-building among diverse stakeholders, knowledge and data sharing, and engagement with decision-makers and the public. Additionally, it seeks to understand and prioritize critical issues impacting the watershed's long-term health and resilience, while identifying collaborative solutions.

As a wildlife tourism-focused business owner, we recognize the national importance of this watershed's health to the species that depend on it and those who come to visit, for tomorrow and generations to come. Wyoming's superlative wildlife brings in thousands of visitors each year—visitors who explore our parks, stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants, enjoy our recreation services, and shop in our communities. Our economy depends on tourism, tourism depends on our wildlife, and wildlife need a healthy and intact ecosystem and watershed. However, the watershed's natural resources are facing challenges from complex issues such as water management and climate change. These issues are requiring greater collaboration between agencies and stakeholders that the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group is bringing together. JH EcoTour Adventures plans to be engaged in the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group for these reasons and wholeheartedly supports TU's WaterSMART CWMP application.

Sincerely,

Taylor Phillips

Owner, Jackson Hole EcoTour Adventures

Founder, WYldlife for Tomorrow

P.O. 10872

Jackson, WY 83002

Taylor Phillips

Owner

Jackson Hole EcoTour Adventures

November 30, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: Avra Morgan  
Mail Code: 84-51000  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80255


Please accept this letter in support of Trout Unlimited's WaterSMART grant application. As a formalized working group, the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group (SRHWG) will be able to focus the efforts of a multitude of conservation groups that are involved in addressing the mounting challenges to the water and aquatic habitats of Western Wyoming.

The Jackson Hole Land Trust (JHLT) recognizes the power of collaborative conservation to effect change with broad public support. The JHLT has supported Trout Unlimited in individual aquatic habitat restoration projects on conservation easement properties. Having a working group to bring conservation partners together to address water quality and habitat degradation will improve efficacy and expand the scope of current efforts to improve water management. As an institution with long-seated relationships with many of the agricultural producers in Western Wyoming, the JHLT is excited to be a contributing member of the SRHWG to help facilitate private landowner and NGO partnerships.

Water is the key to the ecological integrity of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. In the face of increasing threats to water quality and quantity, aquatic habitat function, and agricultural viability, the JHLT has refined its focus to prioritize water resources on the landscape. We heartily support Trout Unlimited's proposal for a new collaborative conservation partnership to help protect and improve the water quality and aquatic habitats of Western Wyoming and look forward to being a partner in the project.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding the support of the Jackson Hole Land Trust.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M R Ludington". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Maxwell R. Ludington  
President, Jackson Hole Land Trust





November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing on behalf of Protect Our Water Jackson Hole (POWJH) to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's (TU) application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This proposal holds great promise for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group (SRHWG), of which our organization is a participating stakeholder.

The proposal, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange", seeks to fortify the new watershed group by facilitating relationship-building among diverse stakeholders, knowledge and data sharing, and engagement with decision-makers and the public. Additionally, it seeks to understand and prioritize critical issues impacting the watershed's long-term health and resilience, while identifying collaborative solutions.

POWJH is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of surface and groundwater in Teton County, WY. We employ a diverse array of collaborative and science-based advocacy, outreach, education, and facilitation programs to carry out our mission. The Wild and Scenic Snake River Headwaters, and the Sole Source Aquifer it provides, are the lifeblood of our community. Formation of the SRHWG was a necessary and exciting step towards ensuring a resilient future for our watershed. Based on our participation in the formation and first meeting of the SRHWG, we are optimistic that working with water managers and water users from across the headwaters can lead to better understanding of the various pressures on water quality.

During this three-year project, POWJH will be engaged in SRHWG meetings and working groups for the purposes of better communication between groups, improved public understanding of water quality and quantity in our watershed, and more effective programs that improve conditions on the ground.

POWJH adamantly supports TU's WaterSMART CWMP application because the complex challenges our watershed faces require innovative, collaborative solutions best accomplished by bringing together a broad coalition of stakeholders with the support of a professional facilitation team.

Matthew Bambach, Water Resources Program Manager at Protect Our Water Jackson Hole



Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing on behalf of Rendezvous River Sports to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This proposal holds great promise for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group, of which our organization is a participating stakeholder.

The proposal, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange" seeks to fortify the new watershed group by facilitating relationship-building among diverse stakeholders, knowledge and data sharing, and engagement with decision-makers and the public. Additionally, it seeks to understand and prioritize critical issues impacting the watershed's long-term health and resilience, while identifying collaborative solutions.

Rendezvous River Sports has been deeply involved in conservation and stewardship of the Snake River Headwaters for over 25 years, including helping found the Snake River Fund, being a leader of the campaign that secured Wild & Scenic protection for over 400 miles of the river, and helping draft and pass the special excise tax initiative that funded Teton County to create its own river management plan with key river access points.

All these projects required thoughtful cooperation that brought a diverse group of people from across the political spectrum to help preserve what makes this headwaters area special. Today, the challenge of maintaining the outstanding remarkable values of the upper Snake will require an even bigger level of collaboration of stakeholders from river runners to irrigators and beyond.

During this three-year project, our staff will continue to engage in Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group meetings with a focus on improving water quality monitoring to ensure the health of our waters. We have already committed dozens of hours to bring this group together and will continue to be a part of this process for the next three years and beyond.

We strongly support TU's WaterSMART CWMP application. The complex challenges our watershed faces require innovative solutions best accomplished by bringing together a broad coalition with the support of a professional facilitation team. Thanks for this consideration.

Aaron Pruzan  
Owner  
Rendezvous River Sports



PO Box 7033  
Jackson, WY 83002  
307-734-6773

[snakeriverfund.org](http://snakeriverfund.org)  
[info@snakeriverfund.org](mailto:info@snakeriverfund.org)

November 13, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: M. Camille Touton, Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80255

Dear Commissioner Touton:

The Snake River Fund (SRF) is a Jackson, Wyoming based 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to the stewardship of and public access to the upper Snake River watershed and is in support of Trout Unlimited's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Planning grant application for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group. Water management in Eastern Idaho and Western Wyoming is made increasingly complex by the myriad of jurisdictions that the water originates from, flows through, and is owned by. The Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group has created a platform for complex dialogs, collaborative learning, and effective policy making and implementation. As a member of the Task Force that shaped the vision for the Watershed Group, and a current member of the Steering Committee, SRF is excited to see what the future holds for this diverse group.

During this proposed three-year project, SRF staff plans to be fully engaged in Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group meetings and the multiple working groups therein. During the three-year project, SRF commits 624 hours at a rate of \$35/hour for a total in-kind contribution of \$21,840.

SRF is grateful for Trout Unlimited's effort to spearhead and apply for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Planning Grant. Snake River Fund is thankful the Bureau of Reclamation funds these kinds of collaborative efforts. The reality of rapidly changing climate is forcing a greater understanding of the history, the laws and the opportunities for water management in the American West. This development is of vital importance for our communities at a local, regional, and national level.

Sincerely,

Orion Hatch  
Executive Director

Snake River Ranch  
5700 Snake River Ranch Rd  
Wilson, WY 83014

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Snake River Ranch to share our support of Trout Unlimited's (TU) application for the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Planning Grant Proposal, offered through the Bureau of Reclamation.

Snake River Ranch is the largest ranch in Teton County, Wyoming that has been growing grass and raising cattle since it was founded in 1929. The ranch sits within the Snake River Watershed and its success, in many ways, depends on reliable access to and distribution of its water rights for irrigation.

Snake River Ranch also appreciates that there are many groups that have a vested interest in how the waters of the Snake River watershed are managed and that benefit from good communication and coordination. TU's proposal, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange", is an important step toward building relationships between a diverse set of interested parties that will lead to enhanced levels of communication, data-sharing, and inter-party coordination.

As the area's population grows, so will the number of interested parties and the challenges to management of the resource. If TU's proposal is accepted, it will help to ensure a proactive approach to building relationships that will be invaluable in the years ahead.

Thank you for considering our letter of support and please do not hesitate to reach out if we can be of any further assistance,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "TURNER", with a long horizontal line extending from the top of the first letter.



**Teton  
Conservation  
District  
Est. 1946**

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

November 28, 2023

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing on behalf of Teton Conservation District (TCD) to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's (TU) application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This proposal holds great promise for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group, of which our organization is a participating stakeholder.

The proposal, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange", seeks to fortify the new watershed group by facilitating relationship-building among diverse stakeholders, knowledge and data sharing, and engagement with decision-makers and the public. Additionally, it seeks to understand and prioritize critical issues impacting the watershed's long-term health and resilience, while identifying collaborative solutions.

TCD's Water Resources Program is dedicated to the stewardship of local surface and groundwater protection, assessment, and restoration. Water quality impairments in Snake River tributaries, temperature exceedances that stress native fish, development impacts, and comprehensive data collection needs drive the work that the newly formed watershed group will address. This group allows collaborative projects to be streamlined across the diverse land management boundaries that exist in the Snake River Headwaters watershed.

During this three-year project, our Water Resources Specialist plans to be actively engaged in Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group meetings and the Data & Monitoring working groups for the purposes of collaborating efforts of data collection, monitoring, and sharing.

In summary, TCD strongly supports TU's WaterSMART CWMP application because a collaborative, scientific approach to water resources management with broad representation is the strongest way to solve the complex issues that exist in the Snake River Headwaters.

Sincerely,

David Lee  
Water Resources Specialist

*Conserving our natural resources – air, land, water, vegetation, and wildlife*

420 W. Pearl Ave.  
P.O. Box 1070  
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

307/733-2110 P  
307/733-8179 F  
david@tetonconservation.org



November 27, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing to express my support for the grant proposal by Trout Unlimited (TU) to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). Teton County Public Works supports the application, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange" and has a history of working with our local TU staff on collaborative projects. This proposal holds great promise for furthering the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group, which Teton County is a participating stakeholder.

During this three-year project, our staff plans to be engaged in Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group meetings and Data and Monitoring Working Group for the purposes of developing a long-term water quality monitoring program.

Currently, Teton County is developing a 20-year vision and implementation Water Quality Master Plan that protects surface water and groundwater resources from future degradation and improves water quality where known degradation is occurring. The Plan will address management of wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water, as well as surface and groundwater resources. The Plan will identify and characterize known and possible threats to these resources, while outlining detailed mitigation strategies. The creation of this watershed group at this time would be very complementary to the outcomes of this plan.

In summary, we support TU's WaterSMART CWMP application because of the progress already made to bring together diverse stakeholders to address the challenging demands on the water quality and quantity issues we face in the Snake Headwaters. We look forward to participating in the Snake River Watershed Group and ensuring that our efforts in water quality are working in concert with each other. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Colligan".

Chris Colligan  
Public Works Project Manager  
307-732-8546  
[ccolligan@tetoncountywy.gov](mailto:ccolligan@tetoncountywy.gov)



ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

November 13th, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing on behalf of the Town of Jackson to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's application to Reclamation's Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This project holds great promise for furthering the initial efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group.

The vision of the Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan is to *"preserve and protect the area's ecosystem in order to ensure a healthy environment, community, and economy for current and future generations"*. We recognize that the Snake River supports the larger ecosystem, provides jobs and tax revenue that strengthens our economy, and is woven into our community character. Working with other stakeholders to uphold the health of the Snake River is critical for our community to thrive.

The project's primary objective is to fortify the Watershed network by facilitating collaborative data sharing and monitoring, fostering enhanced collective understanding of the watershed, and promoting effective communication and education to bolster decision-making and public awareness. Additionally, it seeks to prioritize critical issues impacting the watershed's long-term health and resilience, while identifying and implementing solutions. The Town of Jackson is excited about this grant because it seeks to streamline initiatives, promote information sharing, and advance watershed-scale projects that benefit a diverse range of water users.

The Town of Jackson supported and helped fund the initial formation of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group because it aligns with the vision, goals, and strategies within our comprehensive plan. Town staff have participated in the task force that helped guide the creation of the group, attended design phase meetings, and provided feedback on the group's purpose, structure, and guiding principles. We look forward to continued participation as engaged stakeholders in meetings and working groups, and by serving the steering committee. During the three-year project, we will commit 20 hours of staff time per year at a rate of \$50 per hour, for a total in-kind contribution of \$3,000. Please give Trout Unlimited's application the highest consideration.

Sincerely,



Tyler Sinclair  
Town Manager





November 30th, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
Mail Code: 86-6300  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing as the Principle Investigator and Director of the Wyoming Anticipating Climate Transitions (WyACT) project to express our support for Trout Unlimited's (TU) application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). This proposal will further the efforts of the new Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group, of which our organization is a participating member.

The proposal, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange", seeks to fortify the new watershed group by facilitating relationship-building among diverse stakeholders, knowledge and data sharing, and engagement with decision-makers and the public. These priorities are aligned with WyACT priorities and pathways for working in the Snake River Headwaters region.

WyACT is a 5-year (2022-2027) project funded by the NSF EPSCoR program and led by the University of Wyoming. WyACT will improve predictive understanding of climate change impacts on the headwaters regions of western Wyoming through building high-resolution downscaled climate projections to drive hydrologic, ecological, and socioeconomic models. WyACT research is anchored in transdisciplinary and collaborative approaches, with the goal of co-producing research outcomes that are useful and usable for management and decision-making. WyACT outputs will be available through a dynamic data portal ([wyadapt.org](http://wyadapt.org)) that will provide information on current and projected future changes in watershed conditions relevant to many members of the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group.

WyACT has so far contributed to the design and launch of the Watershed Group through representatives serving on the task force as well as attending design meetings and the Watershed Group launch event. During this three-year project, WyACT will be actively engaged in the Snake River Headwaters Watershed Group through a nominated representative serving on the steering committee, WyACT researchers contributing to all four working groups, and participating in Group meetings. Through these collaborative interactions, WyACT will strive to work with and elevate the Watershed Group's efforts.



We enthusiastically support TU's WaterSMART CWMP application and look forward to continued innovative collaboration with the Watershed Group in the face of complex and interconnected challenges towards a resilient Snake River Headwaters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent E. Ewers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Brent E. Ewers, Professor and Head, Botany  
Director, WyACT and Biodiversity Institute  
1000 E. University Ave, 3165  
University of Wyoming  
Laramie, WY 82071



## WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

5400 Bishop Blvd. Cheyenne, WY 82006

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### GOVERNOR

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### DIRECTOR

Brian R. Nesvik

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Kenneth D. Roberts

John Masterson

Rusty Bell

November 20, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: M. Camille Touton Commissioner  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Commissioner Touton:

I am writing on behalf of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to express our strong support for Trout Unlimited's (TU) application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP).

The proposal, "Sustaining a New Watershed Group in the Snake River Headwaters to Amplify Stakeholder Engagement, Coordination, Planning, and Knowledge Exchange", seeks to fortify the new watershed group by facilitating relationship-building among diverse stakeholders, knowledge and data sharing, and engagement with decision-makers and the public. Additionally, it seeks to understand and prioritize critical issues impacting the watershed's long-term health and resilience, while identifying collaborative solutions.

The Snake River is an important, blue ribbon sport fishery for native Snake River Cutthroat Trout. The river also supports a relatively intact community of native fishes that has remained unchanged compared to many of the region's other popular rivers. The river is not stocked, and fish populations are dependent upon the maintenance of high quality, connected habitats to continue to sustain wild populations. In addition to trout, the river corridor provides habitat and migratory paths for elk, moose, grizzly bear, and waterfowl. The Snake River provides numerous recreational opportunities, and is ecologically and economically vital to the Jackson region.

The Snake River provides many opportunities to anglers and other recreationists; however, questions over water management practices in the face of a changing climate and a growing population have increased in recent years. Additionally, water quality issues from land use changes have unknown effects on the native fishery. Coordinated watershed restoration, strategic irrigation, and consistent monitoring and research efforts will help address these ecological deficits. The Snake River Headwaters is largely publicly owned, but a number of private stakeholders feel their voices are unheard. A stakeholder or community group comprised of private landowners, outfitters, anglers, conservation organizations, government agencies, and other community groups will greatly aid the implementation of watershed-scale coordination.

Sincerely,

Darren Rhea  
Regional Fisheries Supervisor