



## **Board of County Commissioners - Staff Report**

**Meeting Date:** August 18, 2025      **Presenter:** Chris Colligan  
**Submitting Dept:** Public Works      **Subject:** Public Lands Resolution

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**Statement / Purpose:** Approval of Public Lands Resolution

**Background / Description (Pros & Cons):** The U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Federal Lands will be meeting at Jenny Lake Visitor Center in Grand Teton National Park to hear testimony on the *Great American Outdoors Act: Modernizing and Maintaining National Parks to Celebrate America's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday*. The hearing will examine opportunities to reauthorize and reform the Great American Outdoors Act to enhance public access, improve infrastructure, and create new outdoor recreation opportunities to our national parks. It has been suggested that the county commissioners should provide a resolution to the subcommittee outlining the county's support for federal public land managers and the public lands in Teton County.

**Stakeholder Analysis & Involvement:** Federal Public Land Agencies

**Fiscal Impact:** None

**Staff Impact:** None

**Legal Review:** Gingery

**Staff Input / Recommendation:** No recommendation

**Attachments:** Edited version from Commissioner Newcomb  
Edited version from Commissioner Carlman

**Suggested Motion:** I move to approve the Resolution supporting our Federal Public Lands.



Resolution # 25-\_\_\_\_\_

**RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING  
the TETON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' SUPPORT  
FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND OTHER PUBLIC LANDS**

**WHEREAS,** Teton County is a duly organized county in the State of Wyoming that is comprised of 97% public lands and is home to Grand Teton National Park, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway, the National Elk Refuge, the southern half of Yellowstone National Park, and portions of the Bridger Teton National Forest, Caribou Targhee National Forest, and Shoshone National Forest; and

**WHEREAS,** Teton County's community vision, as stated in its 2012 Comprehensive Plan, is to "preserve and protect the area's ecosystem to ensure a healthy environment, community, and economy for current and future generations"; and

**WHEREAS,** Public lands in Teton County provide high-quality habitat for wildlife and fish, support ecosystem integrity and connectivity, offer diverse forms of recreational access and experiences that allow people to connect with natural and cultural landscapes, improve mental and physical health, foster learning and personal growth, enhance bonds with family and friends, and support the local economy; and

**WHEREAS,** in 2018, Teton County passed Resolution No. 18-040, *Resolution proclaiming conservation principles for U.S. Forest Service lands in Teton County*, (attached), stating the following vision for public lands in Teton County: "To conserve, protect, and enhance wildlife, watershed, and wildland resources and their associated ecological, scenic, recreational, cultural, educational, spiritual, and scientific values for the benefit of present and future generations"; and

**WHEREAS,** Teton County has consistently gone on record supporting federal land management agencies and the protection of public lands from intensive development and supporting the transfer of state and private lands to federal management agencies to support the ecosystem and create more intact federal holdings within Grand Teton National Park, the Caribou-Targhee and Bridger-Teton National Forests and the National Elk Refuge ; and

**WHEREAS,** the National Forests, National Parks and National Elk Refuge within Teton County require adequate local and national support; and

**WHEREAS,** the Wyoming Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, the United States Geological Survey Ecosystems Mission Area, University of Wyoming, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, and many other research agencies and institutions with expertise in wildlife and ecosystem sciences essential for sound management of public lands and wildlife also require adequate local and national support;

**NOW THEREFORE,** having duly met at a regular meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, and having fully considered the matter, it is hereby,

**RESOLVED,** that the Teton County Board of County Commissioners, (the Board), supports the good work of the National Park Service and other federal public land managers within Teton County and advocates for the adequate staffing and funding necessary to manage, conserve, and protect these federal public lands for current and future generations; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the Board urges the United States Congress and relevant federal agencies to increase investments in the stewardship of public lands within Teton County, including but not limited to adequate funding for personnel, infrastructure, scientific monitoring, wildfire mitigation, and visitor management;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that Teton County reaffirms its commitment to working collaboratively with federal public land agencies, Tribal Nations, community partners, and the public to uphold conservation values, ecosystem integrity, and sustainable access to public lands; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the County Clerk of Teton County, Wyoming is directed to transmit this resolution to Wyoming's federal congressional delegation, the Secretaries of the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other relevant federal and state agencies.

**PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Teton County, Wyoming, on this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2025.

**TETON COUNTY, WYOMING**

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**Mark Newcomb, Chairman**  
**Teton County Board of County Commissioners**

**Attest:**

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**Maureen E. Murphy, Teton County Clerk**



Resolution # 25-\_\_\_\_\_

**RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING**  
**the TETON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' SUPPORT**  
**FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND OTHER PUBLIC LANDS**

**WHEREAS**, Teton County is a duly organized county in the State of Wyoming that is comprised of 97% public lands and is home to Grand Teton National Park, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway, the National Elk Refuge, the southern half of Yellowstone National Park, and portions of the Bridger Teton National Forest, Caribou Targhee National Forest, and Shoshone National Forest; and

**WHEREAS**, Teton County had a period of conflict with the federal government of the United States with respect to the establishment and expansion of Grand Teton National Park, particularly in the years 1918 to about 1975; and

**WHEREAS**, during those decades of disagreement, one prominent local leader, famed naturalist Olaus Murie, who favored the expansion of Grand Teton National Park to the size it now is, said, "[t]here was no such thing as getting together and talking it over." Wyoming's Governor in 1943, Lester Hunt, declared, in what turned out to be an empty threat of nullification, "I shall utilize all police authority at my disposal to exit from the proposed Jackson Hole National Monument any federal official who attempts to assume authority;" and

**WHEREAS**, even in those difficult years, there were local voices who saw a way forward that honored the grandeur of the Teton Range and the adjacent mountain ranges while also providing opportunity for a good livelihood and quality of life for local residents. A 1925 petition of Teton County landowners presciently declared, "[t]he area will find its highest and best use as a playground," and it further promoted protection of the valley of Jackson Hole "for the education and enjoyment of the nation as a whole;" and

**WHEREAS**, by 1975, the public conflict of that era was largely over. Reflecting on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1950 expansion of Grand Teton National Park, the Jackson Hole News editorialized about the then 3.5 million annual visitors to Grand Teton National Park, writing, "They don't know this land was once a battleground;" and

**WHEREAS**, in the fifty years since 1975, the challenge for the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the people of Teton County, and the

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citizens of our nation has been to find ways to better balance nature and commerce in this keystone region of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem; and

**WHEREAS**, Teton County’s community vision, as stated in its 2012 Comprehensive Plan, is to “preserve and protect the area’s ecosystem to ensure a healthy environment, community, and economy for current and future generations”; and

**WHEREAS**, Through regular and routine monthly intergovernmental meetings, weekly meetings of the Rotary Club of Jackson Hole reaching back more than fifty years where federal agency and community leaders gather for fellowship and civic improvement, exemplary leadership from the Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, outstanding service from non-profit groups and motivated citizens, and the daily shared experience of living and raising families in a remarkable setting, the people of Teton County ~~has~~ long ago left the strife behind and replaced it with ~~had a long~~, a productive, and mutually beneficial relationship with these federal public land agencies within our county; and

**WHEREAS**, Public lands in Teton County provide high-quality habitat for wildlife and fish, supporting ecosystem integrity and connectivity, ~~while offering both motorized and nonmotorized~~ diverse forms of recreational access and experiences that allow people to connect with natural and cultural landscapes, improve mental and physical health, foster learning and personal growth, enhance bonds with family and friends, and support the local economy; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2018, Teton County passed Resolution No. 18-040, Resolution proclaiming conservation principles for U.S. Forest Service lands in Teton County, (attached), stating supports the following vision ~~of for~~ public lands in Teton County: “To conserve, protect, and enhance wildlife, watershed, and wildland resources and their associated ecological, scenic, recreational, cultural, educational, spiritual, and scientific values for the benefit of present and future generations”; and

**WHEREAS**, Teton County transmitted Resolution No. 18-040 to our federal congressional delegation, recommending US Forest Service lands in Teton County be permanently withdrawn from oil and gas leasing, hard rock mining and scheduled timber harvest, and further seeking the permanent protection of inventoried roadless areas; and:

**WHEREAS**, Teton County has consistently gone on record supporting federal land management agencies and the protection of public lands, including pursuing creative local solutions to protect public land from intensive development; and supporting the transfer of state and private lands to federal management agencies to support ecosystem function and create more intact federal holdings within Grand Teton National Parks, the Caribou-Targhee and Bridger-Teton ~~and~~ National Forests and the National Elk Refuge; and

~~**WHEREAS**, in 2018 Teton County passed Resolution No. 18-040: Resolution proclaiming conservation principles for U.S. Forest Service lands in Teton County (attached); transmitted to our congressional delegation, formally submitting a recommendation for USFS lands in Teton County to be permanently withdrawn from oil and gas leasing, hard rock mining, scheduled timber harvest and to permanently protect inventoried roadless areas;~~

**WHEREAS**, Executive Order 14239, titled "Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness," established a policy of the United States that State and local governments and individuals to play a more active and significant role in national resilience and preparedness, thereby saving American lives, securing American livelihoods, reducing taxpayer burdens through efficiency, and unleashing our collective prosperity; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Forests, ~~and~~ National Parks ~~and~~ National Elk Refuge within Teton County require continued local ~~and national~~ support and have ~~experienced demonstrated through recent~~ challenges where understaffing and underfunding ~~that~~ have ~~led to actions that~~ threatened public safety, damaged natural resources, and negatively impacted the local economy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wyoming Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, the United States Geological Survey Ecosystems Mission Area, University of Wyoming, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, and many other research agencies and institutions with expertise in wildlife and ecosystem sciences that conduct ecosystem and wildlife research that is essential for sound management of public lands and wildlife have also experienced recent setbacks and warrant continued local and national support and continued adequate funding; and

**WHEREAS**, the people of Teton County are proud defenders of public lands, respectful advocates for the federal employees whose services support our economy and way of life, seek a better future for ourselves and our nation, and have no appetite for a new era of strife occasioned by random, unwarranted, and harmful cuts in federal land management agency staffing, budgets, science programs, visitor services and resource management programs;

~~**WHEREAS**, in 2018 Teton County passed Resolution No. 18-040: Resolution proclaiming conservation principles for U.S. Forest Service lands in Teton County (attached); transmitted to our congressional delegation, formally submitting a recommendation for USFS lands in Teton County to be permanently withdrawn from oil and gas leasing, hard~~

~~rock mining, scheduled timber harvest and to permanently protect inventoried roadless areas.~~

**NOW THEREFORE**, having duly met at a regular meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, and having fully considered the matter, it is hereby,

**RESOLVED**, that the Teton County Board of County Commissioners, ~~(the Board)~~, ~~formally~~ supports the good work of the National Park Service and other federal public land managers within Teton County and advocates for the adequate staffing and funding necessary to manage, conserve, and protect these federal public lands for current and future generations; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, ~~that the Board recognizes that, despite the good intentions and warm relations within our community and between our community and the federal land management agencies, we, all of us, together, have failed to find a sustainable balance between nature and commerce, with over-tourism too often spoiling the experiences of our visitors and compromising the natural resources that are our worldwide legacy as well as the foundation of our local economic wellbeing and cultural vitality; and~~

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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board urges the United States Congress and relevant federal agencies to ~~prioritize-increase~~ investments in the stewardship of public lands within Teton County, including but not limited to ~~restored and adequate~~ funding for personnel, infrastructure, scientific monitoring, wildfire mitigation, and visitor management;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Teton County reaffirms its commitment to working collaboratively with federal public land agencies, Tribal Nations, community partners, and the public to uphold conservation values, ecosystem integrity, and sustainable access to public lands; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the County Clerk of Teton County, Wyoming is directed to transmit this resolution to ~~Teton County's Wyoming's federal c~~ongressional ~~D~~elegation, the Secretaries of the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other relevant federal and state agencies.

**PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Teton County, Wyoming, on this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2025.

**TETON COUNTY, WYOMING**



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**Mark Newcomb, Chairman**  
**Teton County Board of County Commissioners**

**Attest:**

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**Maureen E. Murphy, Teton County Clerk**