

## Sale of Trail Creek land floated

In yet another twist relating to the Bridger-Teton National Forest headquarters, Forest Service officials announced in late April that they're considering selling 40 acres of public land in Wilson to help pay for rebuilding various Bridger-Teton facilities and the B-T supervisor's office, which now occupies a 15-acre site on North Cache Street near downtown Jackson.

Forest officials say they're also continuing to work on a deal whereby the Town of Jackson would buy nine acres on the back side of the North Cache site; if this falls through, that acreage may be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Furthermore, they say they're still reserving the option of moving the headquarters out of Teton County altogether.

According to a recent email from Bridger-Teton spokesperson Mary Cernicek, "The Bridger-Teton is in need of an office facility, warehousing and housing, and the Forest is exploring options for obtaining or constructing these facilities. We are looking at refurbishing the existing building, or possibly building the office in a different community, like Alpine."

"The Forest Service has proposed to sell up to 11 acres of the administrative land located in downtown Jackson," she added. "Additionally, the Forest is exploring the possibility of selling up to 40 acres of the 200-acre Lee Administrative parcel located near Wilson."

This latest idea has already met with opposition from the community and the Alliance.

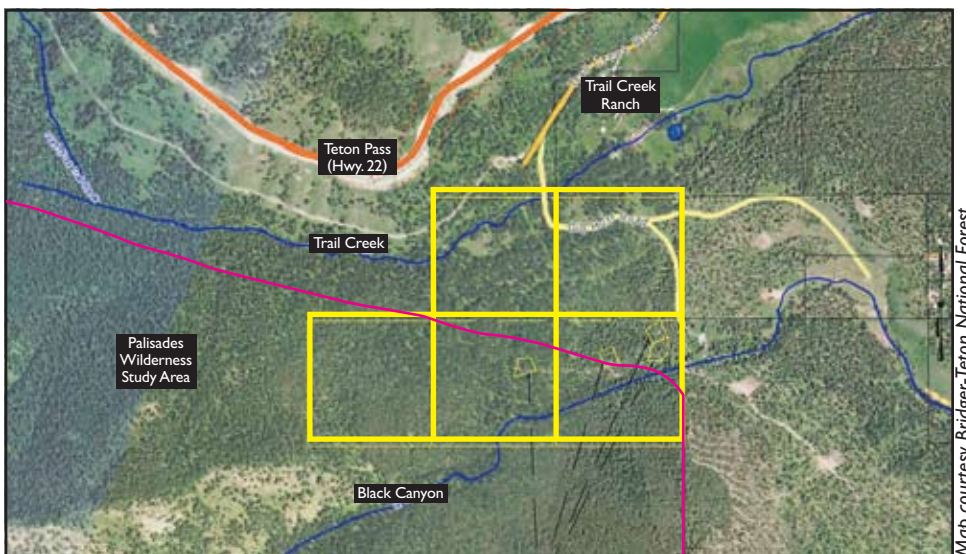
"Public lands shouldn't be sold to fund infrastructure projects for the Forest Service or other federal agencies," says Louise Lasley, Alliance public lands director. "The Lee Ad-

## Teton to Snake fuels study due out in August

Bridger-Teton officials are still working on plans for a project intended to reduce the danger of forest fires next to residences from Teton Village south along the Fish/Fall Creek Road corridor all the way to the Snake River Canyon. About 23,000 acres are being considered for fuel-reduction (using mechanical thinning and prescribed burns) within an 80,000-acre swath; a draft environmental analysis is expected in August.

Issues of concern to the Alliance include the fact that work is being proposed within the Palisades Wilderness Study Area and inventoried roadless areas. The project could also cause significant impacts on wildlife due to habitat fragmentation, removal of vegetation, road construction, harm to soil and watershed integrity, and overall loss of habitat.

Please check [www.jhalliance.org/allianceaction.htm](http://www.jhalliance.org/allianceaction.htm) later this summer for updates, or contact Louise Lasley, Alliance public lands director, at (307) 733-9417 or [Louise@jhalliance.org](mailto:Louise@jhalliance.org). ■



Map courtesy Bridger-Teton National Forest

The 200-acre Lee Administrative Site is made up of five 40-acre parcels (marked in yellow above), located near the base of Teton Pass, just beyond Trail Creek Ranch. Forest Service officials are considering selling part of the site to help pay for Bridger-Teton facilities, including its headquarters, which they say might end up being built outside Teton County. While some of the Lee site lies within the Palisades Wilderness Study Area, Bridger-Teton spokesperson Mary Cernicek says that the Forest probably wouldn't pursue selling any of the land within that boundary, marked in magenta above.

ministrative Site presents even greater issues than just the selling of public land. It is within a Wilderness Study Area, it is surrounded by parcels that have been placed in conservation easements for protection, it is in a heavily used recreational area and it is in a highly productive wildlife area. Any of those alone would argue against selling it for development.

"If the community is sincere in their desire to see the Bridger-Teton supervisor's office remain in Jackson, there should be greater discussion on alternative ways to fund the needed new building and infrastructure."

Ever since it first came to light back in 2007 that the Forest Service was planning to move the

Bridger-Teton supervisor's office out of Teton County, the Alliance has worked to help our community find ways to keep it here, plus help the Bridger-Teton figure out how to fund needed new facilities without selling off public lands. Contact Louise Lasley at [Louise@jhalliance.org](mailto:Louise@jhalliance.org) or (307) 733-9417 if you'd like to get involved.

Although formal comment periods regarding the possible sale of part of the Lee site likely won't be set for some time, people can let the Forest Service know what they think about all this in the meantime by writing to:

Michael Schrotz, Bridger-Teton National Forest, P.O. Box 1888, Jackson, WY 83001; or email [mschrotz@fs.fed.us](mailto:mschrotz@fs.fed.us). ■

## Proposed National Forest planning rules too weak

In February, the National Forest Service released new proposed rules that will determine how and for what purposes America's forests will be managed for years to come. At the same time, they also released a draft environmental analysis on the rules; comments were due in mid-May.

The Alliance's comments on the draft echoed those of other conservationists. On the bright side, the proposed rules require forest supervisors to develop plans that maintain or restore the structure, function, composition and connectivity of healthy and resilient ecosystems. However, the new rules lack criteria for defining and monitoring ecosystems to guarantee their long-term health. They also leave too much discretion up to local forest managers. Conservation policies need to ensure accountability, and to use the best available science to set clear standards and spell out actions to be taken if conditions fall below them. We hope to see these concerns addressed in the final EIS this Fall. ■

Water flows over a beaver dam in the “44,720” area at risk of energy development, about 40 miles southeast of Jackson. There are more than 9,700 existing wells – with thousands more proposed – in and around Sublette County. All of them have direct and cumulative impacts on water and air quality – and on wildlife – that extend far beyond their footprints.



Photo courtesy Lloyd Dorsey/Greater Yellowstone Coalition

## Good news, bad news, good news for Wyoming Range? Only time will tell...

Conservationists breathed a sigh of relief this past January when Bridger-Teton National Forest Supervisor Jacque Buchanan decided to cancel energy leases on 44,720 acres on the Wyoming Range, saying that development there would cause unacceptable impacts to air quality and wildlife.

However, a coalition of energy companies and their trade group, the Western Energy Alliance, along with the Sublette County Commissioners, appealed Buchanan’s decision. Also, U.S. Rep. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., and other members of Congress asked Regional Forester Harv Forsgren to rescind the decision, on the grounds that it was bad for the country’s energy independence and security.

On May 5, Buchanan reversed her decision to cancel the leases, citing the need for more analysis. In a Bridger-Teton press release, Buchanan said, “Withdrawing the

Record of Decision will allow further evaluation of several key issues, including, but not limited to, the potential impacts to air quality, lynx habitat and mule deer migration routes. Another decision will be forthcoming.”

Although this action may represent a setback, it could also offer some unique opportunities. The new supplemental analysis would likely have to take into account air quality and other impacts from yet another new energy development (the 3,500-well “Normally Pressured Lance” natural gas field) being proposed south of Pinedale.

We anticipate that the additional environmental analysis will provide even stronger evidence against drilling, and this could bolster arguments for protecting other areas of the Wyoming Range that are also at risk (see box). We’ll keep you posted at [www.jhalliance.org/allianceaction.htm](http://www.jhalliance.org/allianceaction.htm) as this issue plays out. ■

### What about Hoback Wells?

Thanks to all of you, and tens of thousands of other folks from across Wyoming and the nation, Bridger-Teton officials received more than 50,000 public comments on their draft environmental study of Plains Exploration and Production Company’s “Hoback Wells” development proposal. The vast majority opposed PXP’s plan to drill 136 natural gas wells in the pristine Noble Basin area of the Wyoming Range.

Visit [www.wyomingrange.org](http://www.wyomingrange.org) for more on PXP’s proposal, and for ways you can help protect places that are just too special to drill.

### Yellowstone winter-use plan comments due by mid-July

The preferred alternative in Yellowstone National Park’s new draft winter-use plan would allow a maximum of 330 best available technology (BAT) snowmobiles and 80 snowcoaches per day in the park for about half of the winter season. The rest of the season would see maximums of between 110 and 220 snowmobiles, and 30 to 80 snowcoaches per day. Park Service officials say the varying levels of use will let them observe how park resources – such as wildlife, habitat and air quality – react to the different levels, and aid “learning through management.”

The alternative also retains current requirements that all snowmachine trips be guided, and that the trips be restricted to existing park roads groomed for oversnow vehicles. Use of BAT snowmobiles would continue, and a new limit on nitrogen oxide emissions would be implemented. Visit <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/yell> and click on “Winter Use Plan/EIS” for details and information about how to comment. ■

### Fate of state-owned land in Teton Park hinges on funds

In February, following many efforts by Teton County legislators and others, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead signed a bill allowing the state to sell 1,405 acres of school trust lands to the Interior Department for inclusion in Grand Teton National Park. Since these are parcels that could otherwise end up being developed, it’s key for the federal government to work out a payment plan, but the nation’s budget woes may throw a wrench into the works. Please consider urging Wyoming’s Congressional delegation to seek the \$107 million it will take to buy and protect these inholdings in Teton Park, while benefiting the state’s schools. Contact information for Sens. John Barrasso and Mike Enzi and Rep. Cynthia Lummis is available at [www.jhalliance.org/takeactioncontacts.htm](http://www.jhalliance.org/takeactioncontacts.htm). ■

For updates and background information on these and many other public lands issues, check our recent Alliance Action e-newsletters and previous Alliance News magazines via [www.jhalliance.org/library.htm](http://www.jhalliance.org/library.htm).