



**Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance**

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## ***News Release***

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### **Pilot project aims to fill missing link in Teton County's wildlife protection**

(JACKSON, WYO.) Jackson Hole's wildlife is world-renowned, but whether the valley's species can continue to survive in the face of human population growth and development is still uncertain. A new project, funded by a \$13,200 grant from 1% for the Tetons, is helping to get the valley one step closer to these answers.

With these funds, the Conservation Alliance will be able to contract with research organization Craighead Beringia South to determine what a vegetation-mapping project for private lands would entail, and how to get there. This pilot project will help to fill one of the largest gaps in the data regarding wildlife and habitats in the county. The Sustaining Jackson Hole Environment Group and the draft Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan (released April 2009) both prioritize the creation of a vegetative cover-type map to further enable wildlife protection on private lands.

Craighead Beringia South will design a research approach that will be tested and tried for its efficacy, exploring ways in which existing data, such as Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data, could be used to establish a vegetation map on private lands, linking it to existing public lands data.

Baseline data collected in this project will open the door for future research regarding habitat – its condition and quality, how much is available for wildlife and how well it connects to other habitat. This data will in turn contribute to cumulative impacts studies and enable the community to monitor small changes over time.

This project, entitled "Vegetation Mapping: A Missing Link in Wildlife Protection in Teton County" will also build off of the Conservation Alliance's Natural Resources Overlay (NRO) mapping project, released in 2008. That project was contracted with the Conservation Research Center of Teton Science Schools, and identified a vegetation map as one of the largest data gaps in the county.

"Without vegetation mapping, the community's ability to protect wildlife is impaired," said Executive Director Paul Hansen. "This project will be a step in the right direction. It will help all of us who love the land – conservationists, private landowners and other community members – have the best possible information for land-use planning and help us all make the best decisions on the stewardship of our wildlife and natural resources."

"We are looking forward to working on this project with the Conservation Alliance," said Derek Craighead, founder and president of Craighead Beringia South. "We are excited that 1% for the Tetons is supporting this effort."

"Our community must have baseline data on our natural resources – which this project specifically enables – so that we can make informed land-use decisions in the future" Hansen states. "In our community, science and planning must go hand in hand."

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The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to responsible land stewardship in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, to ensure that human resources are in harmony with the area's irreplaceable wildlife, scenic and other natural resources.