

Is It Acceptable To Let A Species Go Extinct In A National Park?

Tucked away between national parks and forests, Jackson Hole may seem to be a natural haven, removed from large-scale industrial energy development in other parts of Wyoming. However, proposals for vast amounts of oil and gas development elsewhere in the state threaten long-term effects on the Grand Teton area's wildlife, air and quality of life.

Just 90 miles southeast of Jackson Hole, the beautiful Upper Green River Valley is marked by seas of sagebrush, rugged western landscapes and abundant wildlife, including the pronghorn antelope. It is also home to another world-class natural resource: massive reserves of oil and gas. The two images on this page juxtapose two resources of the Upper Green.

Of the 1.2 million acres of public lands and minerals in the Upper Green, more than 80 percent of the landscape is leased for oil and gas development. In the next decade, we will most likely see up to 10,000 new wells.

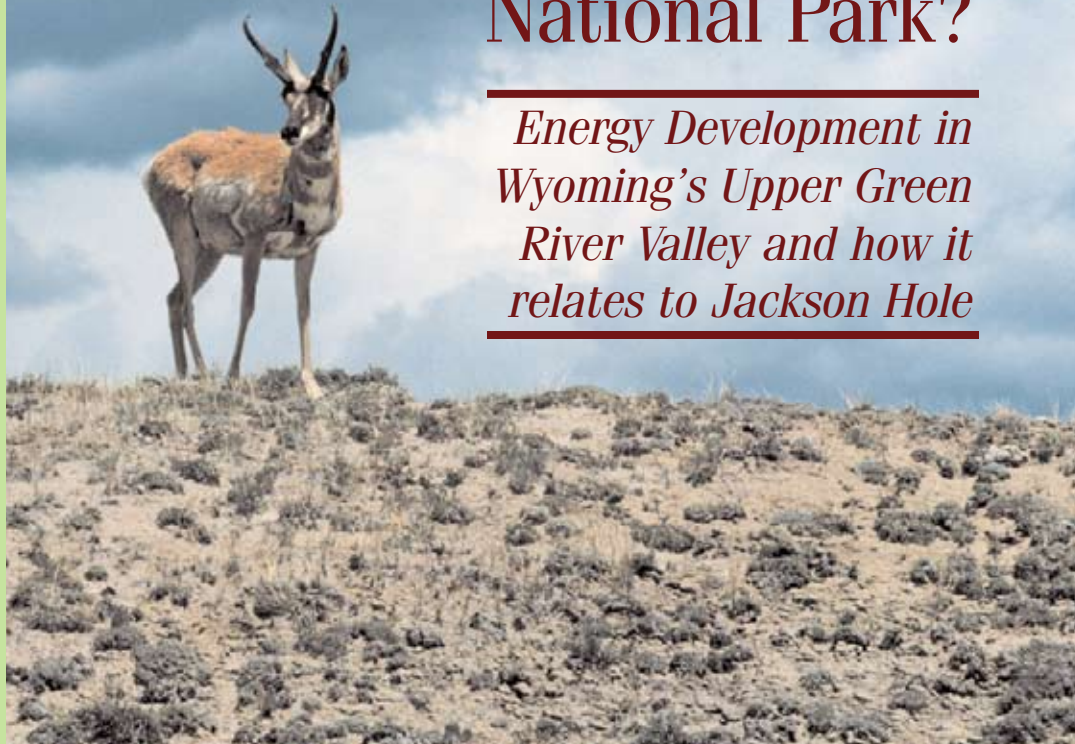
The people, wildlife and environment of the Upper Green will surely see enormous effects from oil and gas development. Changes won't stop there. Jackson Hole is inextricably linked to the Upper Green – and so is Grand Teton National Park's pronghorn antelope population, which depends on an increasingly difficult annual migration to the oil and gas region southeast of Jackson for winter habitat. The extreme amounts of new industrial development proposed could put our national park's antelope population at risk. As renowned scientist Joel Berger questions, "Is it acceptable to let a species go extinct in a national park?"

The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance is promoting a balanced approach to development to protect the wildlife, clean air and quality of life so important to Jackson Hole and the Upper Green River Valley communities.



JACKSON HOLE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

Energy Development in Wyoming's Upper Green River Valley and how it relates to Jackson Hole



Above: While thousands of pronghorn antelope roam the Upper Green River Valley's sagebrush flats, only a few hundred make the increasingly tricky migration to Grand Teton National Park each spring. Photo: Franz Camenzind.

Below: Oil wells span the Upper Green River Valley's Jonah Field, where the wells are spaced 40 acres apart. A proposed infill project may add more wells, spacing the drilling pads as little as five acres apart. Photo: J. Selkowitz.



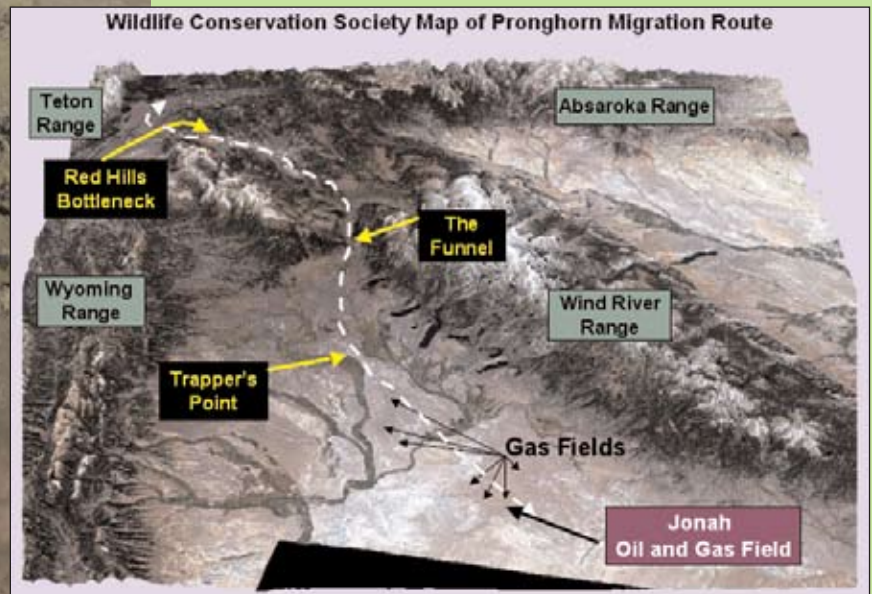
The Upper Green & Jackson Hole:

1. Wildlife Migration

The survival of pronghorn antelope in Grand Teton National Park depends on annual migration from the Upper Green River Valley. Subdivisions and fences have already made migration more difficult. Future energy development threatens to disturb habitat and cut off the route at key passages.



Photo: Franz Camenzind



Above: The dotted line portrays the pronghorn antelope migration from the Upper Green River Valley to Grand Teton National Park. The Red Hills Bottleneck, the Funnel and Trapper's Point provide natural challenges to migration; gas fields, including the Jonah Field, restrict it further. Map courtesy of Wildlife Conservation Society.

Above: The last leg of the annual spring migration of pronghorn antelope to Grand Teton National Park from the Upper Green River Valley. This seasonal migration is the second longest mammal migration route in the western hemisphere, with an average round trip of about 200 miles. Photo: J. Selkowitz

2. Unique Quality of Life

Whether enjoying a picnic in Antelope Flats, lost in a gaze at the Tetons or relaxing on a family canoe trip on Boulder Lake, quality of life is important to everyone in Wyoming. Every type of growth carries its own changes and impacts, and Western Wyoming's energy development boom promises to add stress to our daily way of life. Maintaining our quality of life will involve monitoring changes in traffic, noise, crime, private development and the cost of living, and being committed to preserving the natural qualities that we all find important in choosing Wyoming as our home.

Right: This drill rig along the New Fork River in the Upper Green River Valley impacts more than the area immediately surrounding it. Photo: Lloyd Dorsey.



Three Major Connections

3. *The Air We Breathe*

Air quality is a real and major concern associated with oil and gas development, which emits literally tons of ozone-causing pollutants and proven carcinogens such as benzene. Air quality already has been impacted in the Wind River Range, and because Jackson Hole and the Upper Green share air currents, these impacts may spread to Jackson Hole and Grand Teton National Park.

“Traditionally, the ways to mitigate individual well violations has been very tall stacks or closing the area to the public – but, this would be the first time a whole gas field would be closed to the public because of air quality issues.”

– Memo regarding a proposal to add 3,100 new wells in the Upper Green River Valley’s Jonah Oil and Gas Field, 2003. This memo is from the Bureau of Land Management, an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior charged with sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Left: Flaring is a process that burns off impurities that remain in gas wells after drilling. **Above:** Just six hours after flaring, visibility of Warbonnet Peak in the Wind River Range is obscured. This picture was taken from a vantage point five miles south of Pinedale, near the flaring site. Photos: Perry Walker, 2003.



The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance is Making a Difference

Our Current Work Includes:

- Working with state and federal officials to ensure that we have clean air to breathe.
- Bringing together local citizens through information lunches, evening forums, literature and field trips to express broad support for balancing energy development with wildlife, clean air and quality of life values.
- Working with landowners in the Cora area to keep oil and gas development out of sensitive areas like the foothills of the Wind River Range.
- Coordinating with agencies and wildlife professionals to protect wildlife and key migration routes.
- Actively participating in the Upper Green River Valley Coalition, a group of landowners, businesses, hunters and community members, to draft a Responsible Energy Development plan. The coalition is advocating for the Bureau of Land Management to adopt the plan as it leases 10,000 new wells. Visit www.uppergreen.org.



Photo: George Wuerthner

**To get involved or help support this campaign, contact: JACKSON HOLE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE
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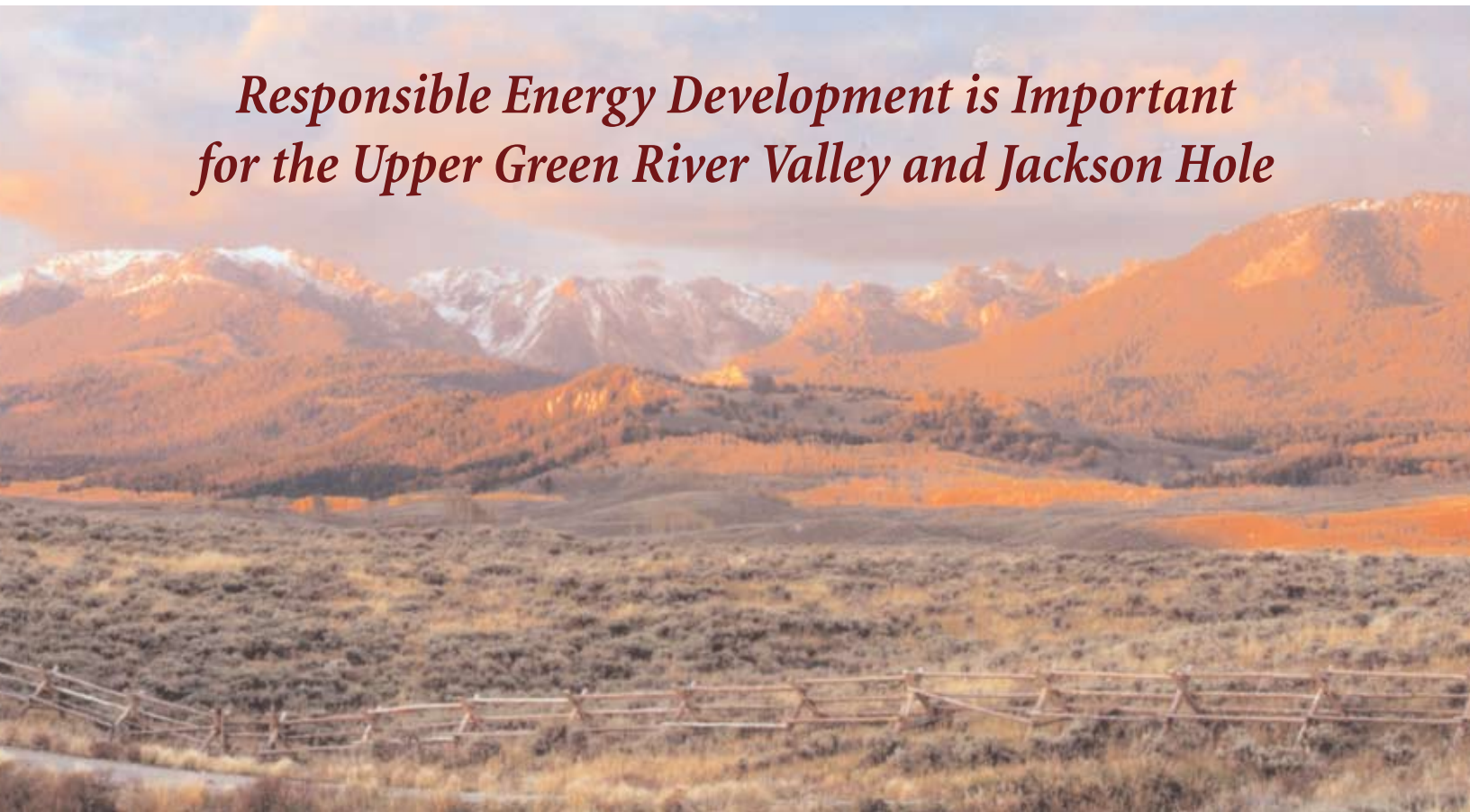
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*Responsible Energy Development is Important
for the Upper Green River Valley and Jackson Hole*



In the face of increasing pressure to drill for oil and gas on public lands, protecting our natural resources and quality of life will involve planning the scope and pace of energy development in Western Wyoming. **Above:** This picturesque section of the Upper Green River Valley, with the Wind River Range in the background, is located near Cora, Wyoming. The Alliance is fighting to keep sensitive areas, such as these, free from oil and gas development. Photo: Sally Adler.