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# Welcome to the Alliance's Conservation Vote Round-Up

# Dear friend in conservation,

As I write this letter, we're in the early days of "social distancing," following Public Health recommendations to protect the most vulnerable members of our community. Most of my conversations are about how strange it is to isolate and quarantine ourselves, and how the bonds of community and democracy are being tested. I hope by the time you read this letter that our world is on the mend, and we're seeing a light at the end of the tunnel. Either way, my short experience with isolation so far has made me more committed than ever to the basic principles and values of community organizing: we are stronger together; it all comes down to 1-on-1 human relationships; and change only happens when people get together and make demands. I hope this conservation-focused "Accountability Check" inspires you to engage more in our local community and democracy, and I hope it spurs our partners in human services and public health to hold our elected representatives accountable on "their" issues too! As this pandemic has made clear, we're all in this together and we can't look at the world from just one lens.

For 40 years, the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance has worked to protect the wildlife, wild places, and community character of Jackson Hole. Recently, we have built a civic engagement program to empower our members, and all community members, to be active participants in our local democracy – and to hold our elected representatives accountable to our shared values.

"An enlightened citizenry is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic. Self-government is not possible unless the citizens are educated sufficiently to enable them to exercise oversight."

— Thomas Jefferson

We have found that most people in Jackson – longtime locals, newer residents, visitors, and elected representatives – consider themselves to be conservationists. You probably do too. But do you know if your conservation values are being effectively championed by your elected representatives?

It can be a challenge to get involved and make a difference if you aren't "in the weeds" of local politics every day. The state legislature has a well-organized website that is constantly updated with the latest information on state bills – if you have time to keep up with it. And even with a great local newspaper, it's often hard to keep track of what happens in our Town Council and County Commission Chambers.

For the past two years, we have been regularly publishing the Alliance Accountability Check. I hope you've seen our ads in the News & Guide highlighting local elected representatives' decisions on key conservation issues. We will continue to publish those throughout the year to keep you up to speed. And here, for the second time, is our Conservation Vote Round-Up of the most important conservation votes from the past year.

By tracking our representatives' votes on a variety of bills and local decisions, we can hold them accountable to prioritizing wildlife, wild lands, and our strong, diverse, and vibrant local community. We hope this tool will help you understand your elected representatives' stances and values on these issues.

We must also acknowledge the limitations of judging representatives on a few selected votes. These votes might not reflect the complexity of their thinking or their values. And many important discussions and decisions never go to a formal vote, so we see this round-up as a start, not the end, of good conversations with your representatives. Lastly, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we never support or oppose candidates for office – but we do occasionally lobby incumbents, to hold them accountable to their promises and our values!

Sincerely,

Skye Schell, Executive Director



Town of Jackson

# **Behind the Votes – Jackson Town Council**

# Approval of Snow King Master Plan Amendment (Passed – 1/6/20 – Alliance opposed)

The Snow King Base Area Master Plan governs development on the private land at the base of Snow King, including the hotel, condos, and currently-vacant land. After years of discussion, the council voted to approve an amendment that gave the developers much of what they wanted, including the ability to reconfigure and more easily sell condo projects, a potential zipline location, and no change to almost-free leases of town land. In exchange, the landowners accepted the same housing

mitigation rates that already applied to the rest of town and agreed to a 1% fee on commercial activity at the base. Town Council's final decision didn't require the 1% fee to support Snow King ski area operations year-in and year-out like the Alliance and the Jackson Hole Ski & Snowboard Club both hoped it would, as this fee has the potential to bring in close to a half million dollars every year. Visit jhalliance.org/snowking to learn more about why we believe a better future for Snow King is possible.

# **Genevieve Block Rezone** (Passed – 7/15/19 – Alliance supported)

The Save the Block campaign started when a group in our Conservation Leadership Institute organized a groundswell of community support to reject a proposed upzone to enable a full-block hotel. This immense support laid the foundation of the Jackson Hole Land Trust's successful "Save the Block" fundraising campaign. This community purchase

required a zone change and subdivision. By voting to change part of the zoning of the block, the council preserved key historic buildings and green space. This project was a great example showing that sometimes the community has to say "no" to a bad idea (the hotel upzone) in order to say "yes" to a great outcome.

# Hog Island Development Proposal (Failed - 4/23/19 - Alliance opposed)

Developers proposed building a large market-rate subdivision in Hog Island. This proposal would have required amending the Comprehensive Plan and would have been a textbook example of leapfrog sprawl into rural land – without any guarantee that the homes would be permanently affordable to local workers and families. Luckily, the Town

Council and County Commissioners held firm to the Comprehensive Plan and <u>said "no thanks"</u> – knowing that development proposals will always come back, and that the community can wait until proposals actually provide a net positive to our community on all fronts (housing, open space, wildlife, and transportation).

# **Housing Mitigation Letter to Corporations Committee** (Passed – <u>10/7/19</u> – <u>Alliance supported</u>)

The Wyoming Legislature's Joint Interim Corporations, Elections, and Political Subdivisions Committee met in Jackson during the interim session. Housing mitigation was not on the agenda, but after "testimony" during an unpublicized lunch hosted by development advocates, the Committee voted to bring back anti-housing bill HB277 in their next meeting. HB277 failed in 2019 and would have eliminated

local authority to require developers to pay a fee or build workforce housing for a portion of the employees their project generates. The Town Council voted to write a <u>letter outlining their position against</u> <u>HB277</u> and defending our local housing mitigation rules. This bad bill came back as HB22 in the State budget session in February – see the State section for more.

# **Letter to the Jackson Hole Airport Board re: Heli Tours** (Passed – 12/2/19 – Alliance supported)

'Heli No' was a successful Alliance & friends campaign in 2000 to stop a proposal for helicopter tours around our valley. A new proposal is back with a different operator. This time, the Airport Board says they can't legally say no, which makes it imperative to let the operator know how the community feels. The Town drafted a letter to the Jackson Hole

Airport Board <u>stating their opposition</u> to helicopter tours, discussing the history of the issue, and requesting that the FAA complete the environmental and safety studies requested by the original resolution. The Town Council voted unanimously to submit the letter to the Airport Board.

# **Mountain Towns 2030 Climate Action Pledge** (Passed – 12/2/19 – Alliance supported)

Following a climate conference in Park City, Utah, <u>Mountain Towns 2030</u> aims to build a coalition of mountain towns transitioning to net zero carbon footprint by 2030. Whether or not to sign the pledge sparked a <u>thoughtful debate</u> among our local representatives. Concerns included Teton County's already-tenuous relationship within Wyoming, criticisms

over the lack of tangible action items, and the importance of solidarity and collaboration with other mountain communities. The Alliance voiced its support, citing climate change as the top threat to our wildlands, wildlife, and community character. Ultimately, the Town Council and County Commission unanimously agreed to sign the pledge.

# Putting Wildlife Crossings on the SPET ballot (Passed – 7/15/19 – Alliance supported)

The <u>long debate over the SPET ballot</u> yielded conversations about "bundling," which measures to include and how much money each proposal would get. Upon final decision, nine of ten local representatives (including four Town Councilors) voted to put \$10M for wildlife crossings and nine other measures individually on the ballot.

The Alliance always thought getting wildlife crossings on the ballot at a significant level would be harder than getting it passed by the voters – and that was true, as the voters supported the measure with an amazing 79% yes vote. (Thank you, voters!)



	Alliance Stance	Arne Jorgensen Councilor	<b>Hailey Morton</b> <i>Levinson Vice Mayor</i>	Pete Muldoon Mayor	<b>Jonathan Schechter</b> <i>Councilor</i>	<b>Jim Stanford</b> Councilor
Approval of Snow King Master Plan Amendment	Opposed	X	X	X	X	$\checkmark$
Genevieve Block Rezone	For		<b>√</b>	$\checkmark$	<b>√</b>	$\checkmark$
Hog Island Development Proposal	Opposed	<b>√</b>		$\checkmark$		Absent
Housing Mitigation Letter to Corporations Committee	For	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Letter to the Jackson Hole Airport Board re: Heli Tours	For	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	Absent	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>
Mountain Towns 2030 Pledge	For			$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$
Putting Wildlife Crossings on SPET ballot	For	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$



# **Teton County**

# **Behind the Votes – Teton County Board of County Commissioners**

# Hog Island Development Proposal (Failed - 4/23/19 - Alliance opposed)

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'Heli No' was a successful Alliance & friends campaign in 2000 to stop a proposal for helicopter tours around our valley. A new proposal is back with a different operator. This time, the Airport Board says they can't legally say no, which makes it imperative to let the operator know how the community feels. The County Commissioners drafted a

<u>letter</u> to the Jackson Hole Airport Board stating their opposition, asking for an FAA study on public lands impacts and requesting that the Comprehensive Plan's "community first" guidelines be followed. The County Commissioners voted unanimously to submit the letter to the Airport Board.

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ballot. The Alliance always thought getting wildlife crossings on the ballot at a significant level would be harder than getting it passed by the voters – and that was true, as the voters supported the measure with an amazing 79% yes vote. (Thank you, voters!)

/	liance Stance	Mark Barron County Commissioner	Greg Epstein Vice Chair, County Commissioner	Natalia D. Macker Chair, County Commissioner	Mark Newcomb County Commissioner	<b>Luther Propst</b> County  Commissioner
Hog Island Development Proposal	Opposed	X	$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$	
Letter to the Jackson Hole Airport Board re: Heli Tours	For	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Mountain Towns 2030 Climate Action Letter	For	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	
Putting Wildlife Crossings on the SPET ballot	For	<b>√</b>	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	
	Legend vote aligns with Alliance conservation stance voted against Alliance conservation stance					



# **Get Involved with the Democratic Process**

Engaging with your representatives directly is an essential part of making change. Even though the public cannot attend governmental meetings in person right now, you can still share your thoughts virtually by contacting your local representatives. Representatives are still making important decisions and hearing from all of us helps guide the process. This is the cornerstone of democracy – they are elected to represent their constituents' views. Additionally, contacting our representatives is the first step to cultivating important relationships with them.

### **Contact your representatives**

Your representatives want to hear from you! Call, email, or meet with your representatives to learn and talk about issues that are important to you.

#### Write a letter

Writing a "Letter to the Editor" in the local paper is a great way to raise public awareness about issues. In addition to your local representatives seeing it, so will all of the paper's readers. Gaining momentum on issues is an important way to enact change.

#### Be effective

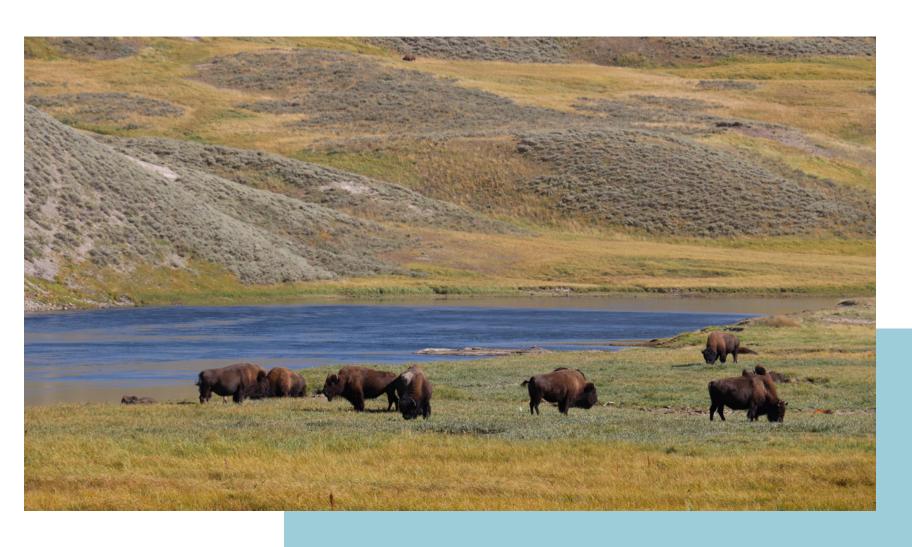
To be as effective as possible, there are certain things you can do while talking to representatives and the community about issues. You can use our tips for giving public comment for guidance in this process. Additionally, we have included your representatives' contact info on the last page so you can easily start engaging in conversation.

#### Vote

The best way to use your voice is to exercise the right to vote. From local elections to the presidential election, your vote matters! Considering an uncertain future, we will keep you up to date with any changes to the voting process in upcoming elections.

"Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting."

— Franklin Delano Roosevelt 32nd President of the United States



**State of Wyoming** 

# **Behind the Votes – State of Wyoming**

The Wyoming State Legislature Budget Session began on February 10, 2020 and ended on March 12, 2020. Budget sessions, held on even-numbered years, mainly focus on state budget decisions. During budget sessions, all non-budget-related bills require a two-thirds vote from the Senate or House for approval, which means it's harder than normal to run non-budget bills. Given Wyoming's diminishing revenue from fossil fuels and a transitioning economy, this session saw many bills aimed to diversify and increase revenue sources. Next year, and every odd-numbered year, the Wyoming legislature will hold a General Session. These sessions allow for a wider variety and higher volume of bills – so we'll be watching it closely. During this session the Alliance lobbied, watched and supported our partners on the following bills:

# **Evaluating the Tax Equivalency of Federal Land in Wyoming – SF110** (Failed – Alliance opposed)

This bill was an attempt to encourage <u>privatization of public lands</u>. This bill would have allocated \$2.5 million of state resources to conduct real estate appraisals of federal lands in Wyoming to assess their value if privatized and their potential amount of property taxes. This would have included National Parks (such as Grand Teton and Yellowstone), National Forests, National Recreation Areas, National Wildlife Refuges (such as the National Elk Refuge), and all other public lands. This bill has

been popping up in State legislatures across the West. Teton County Senator Mike Gierau passed two amendments to the bill including a limitation on appraisals to state lands only, and then voted for it. Another amendment passed in the State Appropriations committee that cut the funding to \$250,000. This bill made it through the Senate and then died in the House Minerals committee. Thanks to our friends at the Wyoming Outdoor Council for leading the opposition.

# **State Trust Lands-Proposals and Study – <u>HB162</u>** (Passed – Alliance opposed)

HB162 will direct the Office of State Lands and Investments to solicit proposals for development of state parcels in Teton County. This very nuanced and thoroughly amended bill first encompassed all state lands and then was narrowed to just Teton County. Our local representatives worked hard to make this bill better through amendments. Thanks to this hard work, the final bill requires any development on these parcels to be congruent with Teton County's Comprehensive Plan; requires the Office of State Lands and Investments to consult and work "in good faith" with local representatives about developments on these

parcels; and prohibits the sale of the parcels. Worst-case outcome: major development projects near Kelly and "Teton Village South" that do not have our community interest in mind. Best-case outcome: local campaigns to purchase those parcels and conserve them forever, like what happened on Antelope Flats a few years ago. Please support local conservation groups in these upcoming campaigns! Note that the votes below are recorded from the House and Senate's 3rd readings on this bill and may not reflect the more nuanced stances our representatives have on this bill.

# Wildlife Crossings Funding Bills - SF4, HB69, SF18 (Passed - Alliance supported)

These three bills will provide new ways to draw revenue into the Wildlife Conservation Account within the State Highway Fund. This account is earmarked for Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) to use on wildlife-highway collision mitigation efforts, including signage, fencing, overpasses, underpasses, and other wildlife-crossing-related measures. Thanks to our partners at the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Wyoming Wildlife Federation, and Wyoming Outdoor Council for leading the support for all three bills.

SF4 Wildlife conservation account – allows WYDOT to accept donations of money or property and to solicit donations to fund the account.

HB69 Wildlife conservation efforts -1 – creates a conservation stamp that can be purchased widely, even outside of Wyoming. All proceeds go towards wildlife conservation efforts related to transportation.

SF18 Wildlife conservation efforts - 2 – allows anyone registering a motorized vehicle in the state of Wyoming the opportunity to make an additional donation to the Wildlife Conservation Account.

Bills that failed on or before introduction:

## Migration Corridors bills - SF135, HB215, HB29 (Failed - Alliance opposed)

In response to Governor Mark Gordon's executive order establishing a process to protect migration corridors, legislators filed three bills to override these protections. The executive order marked a hard-won compromise between stakeholder groups. Some legislators did not support this compromise. The Alliance and many partners pushed back against the legislative attempt to insert politics in what should be a scientific exercise.

SF135 Migration corridors – would have inserted the legislature into migration corridor management and delayed the executive order implementation. This bill failed on introduction votes.

HB215 Designated migration corridors – limit sought to limit the number of designated migration corridors to only seven. This was an arbitrary number that had no scientific basis. This bill failed on the introduction vote.

HB29 Designation of migration corridors – would have stripped Wyoming Game and Fish Department's authority to designate and protect critical habitat in wildlife migration corridors, in turn granting said authority to counties and special interest groups. HB29 was not considered for an introduction vote.

# Town and County Development Regulations - <u>HB22</u> (Failed - <u>Alliance Opposed</u>)

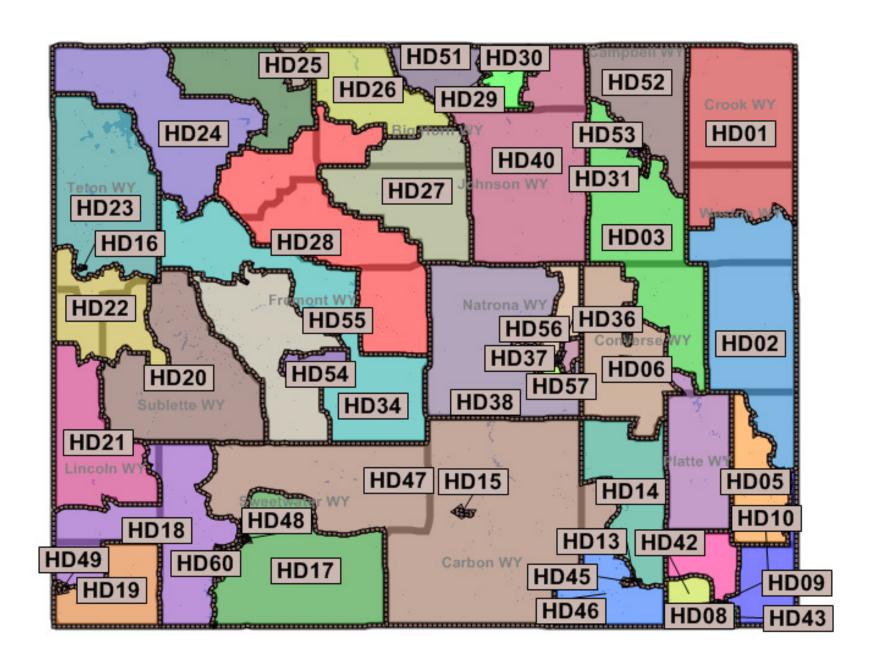
HB22 was a repeat of last year's HB277, and would have removed local governments' ability to place workforce/affordable housing mitigation requirements on commercial or mega-home development. This bill would overrule local decisions that the Alliance supported, and incentivize unchecked growth in Jackson Hole. Opponents feared this bill would hollow out our middle class and make Jackson just a resort

and no longer a true community. It failed on introduction <u>largely due to hard work by our local representatives</u> and <u>community members</u>. These bills are coming from Teton County residents who may be your friends. Please ask them to stop running bills to take away our community's ability to provide housing for local workers through mitigation requirements on new development.

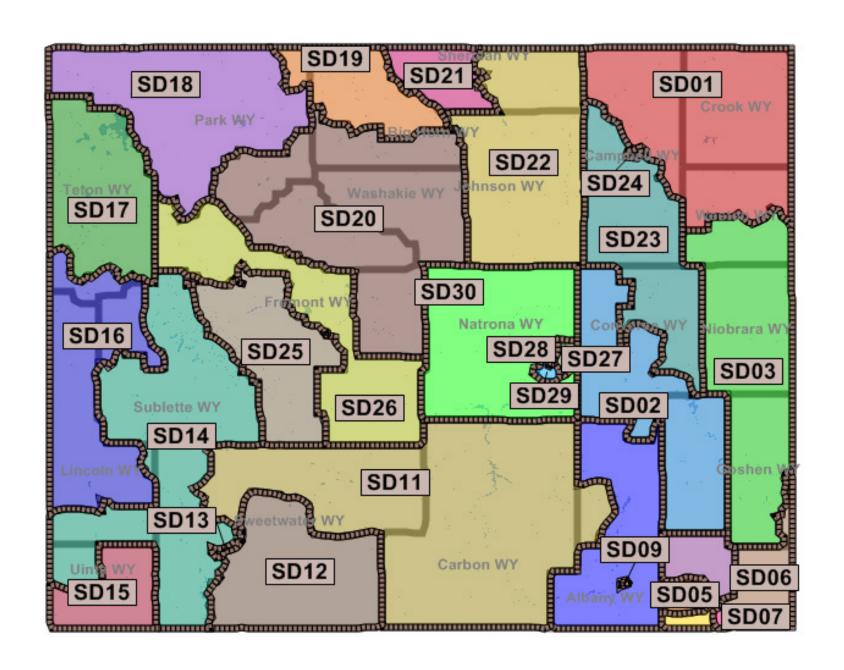
	Alliance Stance	<b>Mark Gordon</b> Governor	<b>Mike Gierau</b> Senate District 17	<b>Jim Roscoe</b> House District 22	Andy Schwartz House District 23	<b>Mike Yin</b> House District 16
Evaluating the Tax Equivalency of Federal Land in Wyoming – SF110	Opposed	Did not reach Legislator's chamber	X	Did not reach Legislator's chamber	Did not reach Legislator's chamber	Did not reach Legislator's chamber
Migration Corridors bills – HB29 SF135, & HB215	Opposed	Did not reach Legislator's chamber				
State Trust Lands- Proposals and Study – HB162 (3rd reading)	Opposed	<u>Did Not Sign</u>	X		<b>√</b>	$\checkmark$
Town and County Development Regulations – HB22	Opposed	Did not reach Legislator's chamber	Did not reach Legislator's chamber			
Wildlife Conservation Efforts 1 & 2 – SF4, HB69, SF18	For	Signed	<b>√</b>	$\checkmark$	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>

Legend vote aligns with Alliance conservation stance voted against Alliance conservation stance

# **Wyoming House of Representatives Districts**



# **Wyoming Senate Districts**



# Representatives' Contact Information

# **Town of Jackson**

# **Teton County**

# **State of Wyoming**

#### **Arne Jorgensen**

Councilor (307) 733-3932, ext. 1000 ajorgensen@jacksonwy.gov

### **Hailey Morton Levinson**

Vice Mayor (307) 733-3932, ext. 1000 hmortonlevinson@jacksonwy.gov

### **Pete Muldoon**

Mayor (307) 733-3932, ext. 1000 pmuldoon@jacksonwy.gov

## **Jonathan Schechter**

Councilor (307) 733-3932, ext. 1000 jschechter@jacksonwy.gov

# **Jim Stanford**

Councilort (307) 733-3932, ext. 1000 jstanford@jacksonwy.gov

### **Mark Barron**

Commissioner (307) 732-8403 mbarron@tetoncountywy.gov

## **Greg Epstein**

Vice-Chair (307) 732-8404 gepstein@tetoncountywy.gov

#### Natalia D. Macker

Chairwoman (307) 732-8406 nmacker@tetoncountywy.gov

#### **Mark Newcomb**

Commissioner (307) 732-8407 mnewcomb@tetoncountywy.gov

### **Luther Propst**

Commissioner (307) 732-8405 Ipropst@tetoncountywy.gov

### **Mark Gordon**

Governor (307) 777-7434 Mark.Gordon@wyoleg.gov

#### Mike Gierau

Senator, Senate District 17 (307) 413-0109 Mike.Gierau@wyoleg.gov

### **Jim Roscoe**

Representative, House District 22 (307) 730-5389 Jim.Roscoe@wyoleg.gov

# **Andy Schwartz**

Representative, House District 23 (307) 413-6464 Andy.Schwartz@wyoleg.gov

### **Mike Yin**

Representative, House District 16 (307) 201-9897 Mike.Yin@wyoleg.gov



# Stay informed. Be engaged.

### **Take Action**

Contact your elected representatives to start a conversation about the issues you care about

## **Volunteer**

Interested in being more involved in the community? Join our vibrant team of volunteers! Email <a href="mailto:ryan@jhalliance.org">ryan@jhalliance.org</a>

#### Become a leader

Graduates of the Conservation Leadership Institute have the skills and knowledge to organize, advocate, and hold local decision-makers accountable for building a better future for Jackson Hole. CLI runs every fall. Look for applications this July. Learn more: <a href="https://www.jhalliance.org/cli">www.jhalliance.org/cli</a>

# Join the Alliance

As a member of the Alliance family, you are helping us protect this amazing place. With your support, we are able to build grassroots power, conduct research, analyze local policy, and achieve better decisions for our community.

# **Save the Dates!**

Alliance Annual Member Meeting: June 10 6-8pm via Zoom Alliance Summer Party: August 26 evening at the Center for the Arts (or online)

# Contact us

PO Box 2728 685 S. Cache St. Jackson, Wyoming 83001 (307) 733-9417 info@jhalliance.org

The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance is a 501(c)(3) recognized non-partisan, nonprofit Wyoming corporation founded in 1979 The mission of the Alliance is protecting the wildlife, wild places, and community character of Jackson Hole.

Contributions to the Alliance may be tax-deductible to donors; consult your tax advisor.





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