



Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

Celebrating 10 Years of Working Together

A Letter from VARD's New Executive Director, Stacey Frisk

Teton County is a fabulous place to visit; after my first month in Teton Valley, I can also say it is an amazing place to live. The community has been warm and welcoming, and the weather is only getting better as winter picks up steam.

The people of Teton County, Idaho, truly have the right to be proud of what they have created and sustained. I have never seen such a firm and caring commitment to shopping locally, supporting local artisans and craftsmen, and building fun and effective civic organizations. Our community has encountered many of the challenges facing small, rural districts across the country. Global market forces have proven to be unpredictable and disruptive, and Teton County has struggled to keep up with ever-changing development patterns. With the help of VARD, an engaged citizenry, and committed public officials, Teton County has made a profound leap from simply reacting to destabilizing forces, to proactively taking charge and directing well-planned and beneficial growth.

In my short time here, I have also come to appreciate the rare and valuable balance that VARD strikes in the nonprofit world.

We are staffed and supported by passionate people committed to strong ideals. Yet, VARD is not an ideological organization. We are pragmatic and solution-oriented, with a firm commitment to achieving smart, science-driven results.

As VARD moves forward, we will continue to promote our central message—that responsible development benefits those who live, visit, and invest in our community. Smart growth in Teton County is necessary to preserve rural character, recreational opportunities, and the ecological wealth that locals and vacationers value so deeply in our valley.

Wise land-use planning is also fiscally beneficial. By encouraging commercial growth in our core communities, we boost retail vibrancy in lively, walkable town centers. Thoughtful residential zoning throughout the county allows for affordable and sustainable extension of necessary

amenities including road maintenance and emergency response services.

It may be tempting to abandon caution in this time of slowed growth, but we risk missing a valuable opportunity. Now is the time to lay the groundwork for managed growth that supports prosperity while also fostering stewardship of natural resources and sustaining rural livelihoods.

VARD is the only nonprofit in the region that addresses the cumulative economic and ecological impacts of development. With your valuable support, we will continue to advocate for wise growth, provide resources and education for planners and citizens, and ensure steadfast oversight of land development in Teton County.

—Stacey Frisk,
Executive Director



Evergreen Grove – A soon-to-be-vacated plat. For more recent photos of developments in Teton Valley, visit www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org.

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VARD Continues Teton Valley Sustainability Series, with Generous Support From 1% for the Tetons

The Teton Valley Sustainability Series is a five-part series of presentations on the issues that matter most to the people of Teton Valley. Join your neighbors as we learn about the issues and discuss how our decisions as a community impact the sustainability of both our economy and our environment and find out how you can become more involved in the decision making process. All events are FREE and open to the public and are held on the following Thursdays from 6:30-8pm at the Driggs Senior Center:



► Thursday, January 19

Building Sustainability Through Recreational Access and Opportunities: The Case for Nordic Grooming in Teton Valley

Join Tim Adams, Executive Director of Teton Valley Trails and Pathways, as he talks about the relationship between recreational amenities such as groomed trails and the desirability and sustainability of a community.

► Thursday, February 9

Who Will Take Over the Ranch?

Join Chet Work, Executive Director of the Teton Regional Land Trust, as he talks about different practical strategies to preserve the working farms and ranches that form the core of Teton Valley's agricultural heritage while also encouraging long-term environmental sustainability in the region.

► Thursday, March 8

The Future Sustainability of Water Resources in Teton Valley

Join Amy Verbeten, Education & Outreach Director for Friends of the Teton River, as she discusses ways that farmers, fish, businesses and communities can benefit when we all work together to restore flowing streams through mechanisms such as voluntary, market-based water transactions.



Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

MISSION: To advocate for the private, public and civic actions that will result in the responsible development and sustainable use of natural resources (water, land, wildlife and air) in Teton Valley.

OFFICE HOURS—
M-TR 9:00am-4:00pm
Friday by appointment

OFFICE ADDRESS—
285 E Little Ave, Driggs, ID 83422

MAILING ADDRESS—
PO Box 1164, Driggs, ID 83422
208.354.1707 ph / 208.354.1709 fx
www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org



www.facebook.com/Valley.Advocates.for.Responsible.Development

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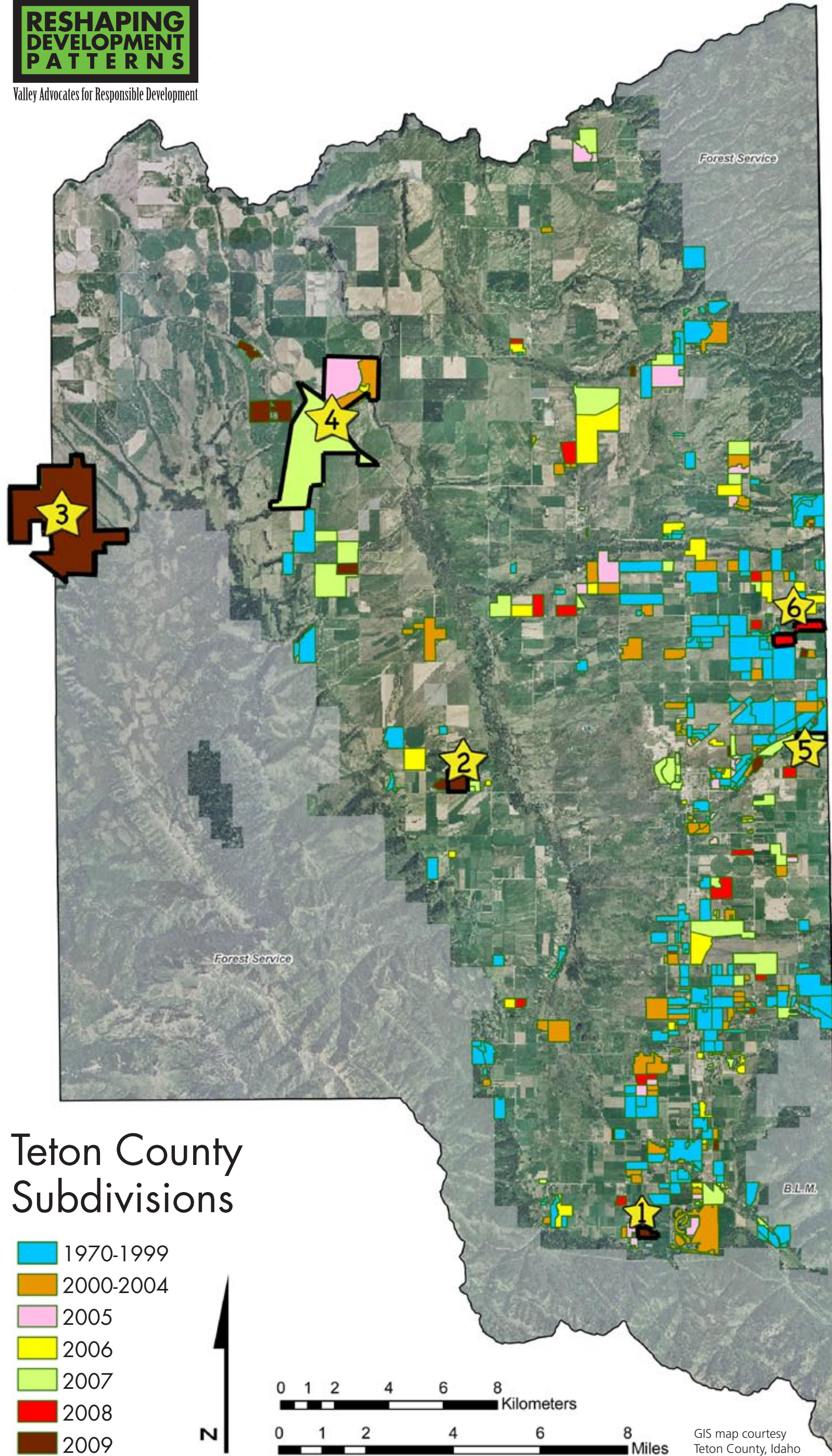
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A TALE OF 6 DEVELOPMENTS

Reshaping Development Patterns Yields Challenges and Successes

VARD is thrilled to report on the subdivision challenges, lessons learned, and success stories that are beginning to accumulate as a result of the Reshaping Development Patterns project. Featured here are the stories of six major developments in Teton Valley currently in different stages of change. The distinct challenges faced by each project have led to a wide range of response as developers, banks and county officials all deal with the unprecedented real-estate situation in Teton Valley.

The Reshaping Development Patterns project has been laying the foundation for the stories outlined below over the past three years. With the momentum generated by these six developments – along with other projects in various stages of redesign or vacation processes – VARD looks forward to even more progress toward sustainable development patterns in Teton Valley during the coming years.



Teton County Subdivisions

- 1970-1999
- 2000-2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009



0 1 2 4 6 8 Kilometers

0 1 2 4 6 8 Miles

GIS map courtesy Teton County, Idaho

1 WARM CREEK MANOR Teton County's first vacated plat



Warm Creek Manor (south of the city of Victor) was approved by the Board of County Commissioners back in early 2009 as a 19-lot subdivision on 60 acres. The development agreement with Teton County expired this February 2011, and there is no financial surety in place. No lots are sold, and 0% of the improvements were ever completed.

On August 11, 2011, the Board of County Commissioners vacated the development's plat, eliminating the building lots and officially returning the land to an agricultural designation. That action marked the first time Teton County has ever moved to vacate a plat. While eliminating 19 lots on 60 acres may seem like a drop in the bucket when compared to the countywide total of nearly 8,000 vacant lots, it's important to remember that the only way to eat a whole cow is one bite at a time. We got ourselves into this predicament one small project at a time, so it only stands to reason that we'll need to get ourselves out the same way.

2 SCENIC RIVER ESTATES An expired paper plat that has applied for a re-plat



This Planned Unit Development (PUD) was originally platted in 2009 with 51 lots on 160 acres on the west side of Teton Valley at 6000W and Bates Road. No lots are sold, and no infrastructure was ever installed. There is no financial surety for this project, and the development agreement with Teton County expired one year ago.

Earlier this spring, the developer applied for a re-plat under Teton County's new re-plating ordinance, but the county planning staff recommended denial because the proposed changes did not provide sufficient community and environmental benefits beyond what was originally approved. Since then, the developer has yet to submit any kind of final application. Thus, it remains to be seen how long this sort of tentative re-plating effort will be allowed to continue before the plat can be vacated by the Board of County Commissioners.

3 CANYON CREEK PUD A paper plat with an uncertain future



Platted in 2009 with 400 lots on 2,600 acres straddling Teton and Madison Counties, Canyon Creek was originally designed as an exceptionally large and remote equestrian-themed PUD that was supposed to include a horse arena, lodge, commercial village and employee housing. The zoning of this area is Ag-20, but as you may recall, the County's old 2007 PUD ordinance allowed for large-density bonuses and additional commercial uses so long as other open-space requirements were met. No lots are sold and no financial surety has ever been posted for this project.

The Canyon Creek development group recently applied for a re-plat under the county's new ordinance, which was met with a lukewarm reception from the Planning & Zoning Commission. Following that hearing, they applied for an extension on their development agreement – which was also denied by the County Commissioners. The re-plat is now on the December agenda to be considered by the County Commissioners.

Because this remote property include large swaths of big game and grouse habitat, the developers are working to sell this entire property to a conservation buyer or otherwise find a way to preserve the property's ecological values. However, because they have until July 2012 to initiate construction on Phase 1, there is still a chance that they may begin to develop the property if a sale is not successful. So for now, the future of Canyon Creek remains uncertain.

4 RIVER RIM A partially-built development that is bank owned and needs to re-plat



River Rim was originally designed as a 5,500-acre, high-end golf course PUD located at the north end of Teton County. Division I was first platted in 2004 with 72 units of 898 acres, including the Overlook Lodge. Division I is considered to be the "finished" portion of River Rim Ranch that we all see today. That first portion of the project is significantly smaller than the unfinished portions of Division II, which many folks don't realize are part of the project because the infrastructure improvements have not yet been installed. However, to say Division I is "finished" really is a relative term because while there are 72 units in Division I, the County Planning Department reports that only 16 houses have been built. Division II is over four times larger than Division I. Platted in 2007 directly across Highway 33, it has an additional 562 units on 4,595 acres, including roughly 36 acres of "incidental" commercial uses including cafes, a lodge, a pro shop, a gas station and a carwash. Teton County GIS estimates that over 550+ acres in Division II have been bulldozed for infrastructure, but this land has been left fallow since at least 2009.

For two years Glacier Bank has owned River Rim. Glacier has indicated that they do not want to invest in completing the improvements for this PUD, but are instead trying to sell the property. The bank has already sold Phase 5 of River Rim, and this raises questions as to whether or not the open-space phases of this PUD can be sold off while still keeping high-density commercial core of the project. (The original development agreement, plats and master plan guaranteed a minimum of 2,700 acres of deeded open space.)

For several months, the Board of County Commissioners was in mediation with Glacier Bank to determine a timeline for Glacier's infrastructure obligations, as well as to resolve the open-space issues. Since then, they have signed an agreement that gives Glacier until 2016 to complete Phase 1 and until 2026 for Phases 2-6. The big question that still lingers is whether a sixth Teton Valley golf course and such a remote resort community will ever be viable.

5 TARGHEE HILL ESTATES An expired partially-built development that wants to re-plat, but struggles with the bank



Some of you may remember that we featured Targhee Hill Estates in our summer 2011 newsletter. Targhee Hill Estates was originally envisioned as a 101-lot gated community along 101 acres of Teton Creek and Stateline Road. With Phase 1 platted in 2006, this PUD was originally designed to be built in multiple phases, including an additional 70 acres of property to the south and west. The sewer line is installed, and the roads and entrance landscaping are roughed in. Within Phase 1, 18 lots have been sold.

The developer would like to re-plat the property to reduce infrastructure and carrying costs as well as increase public benefits such as re-watering Teton Creek and increasing setbacks from the creek, but has struggled to get the banks that own the notes on the property to authorize any plat changes. This project, like River Rim, represents the ongoing challenge with banks that own the debt on incomplete subdivisions. These financial institutions can become the "road block" for actually transforming these projects on the ground. At this time, the banks have not approved any of the proposed plat changes to the Targhee Hill Estates project.

6 MOUNTAIN LEGENDS An expiring paper plat that has asked for its surety back



This Urban Reserve PUD was platted in 2007 with 114 lots on 197 acres at 3500N and Stateline Road northeast of Driggs. This was a controversial PUD even back in 2007, with at least one remand ordered from the Board of County Commissioners and huge public opposition at all of the public hearings held on this project. Part of the reason for the public opposition was the incredibly high density for this project in such a remote and rural area. This was precisely the problem with the old Urban Reserve PUD ordinances – they allowed for huge suburban density bonuses in areas that were far from being "urban."

In 2009, the County Commissioners granted a one-time-only 12- and 18-month phasing extension that gave the developer until April 4, 2012, to install the infrastructure for this development. Since then, no lots were sold, and no infrastructure has been installed. Recently, the developer made a formal request to the Board of County Commissioners to release his surety for the development. A financial surety guarantees that the developer has the funds to actually build the project and not just sell lots in a subdivision that may never be built. The County Commissioners granted the refund on the condition that no lots are sold in Mountain Legends and that between now and the final development agreement deadline of April 4, 2012, this project will either be re-platted or vacated entirely. It remains to be seen whether this development will be returned to an agricultural parcel, or re-platted into something else.



Huntsman Springs provided a beautiful setting for the 2nd Annual VARD Golf Tournament held this September.

THANK YOU for supporting us in the VARD Golf Tournament & Tin Cup Challenge

VARD would like to sincerely thank all of our supporters who donated to us in this year's Tin Cup Challenge and/or participated in our 2nd Annual VARD Golf Tournament & Social at Huntsmans Springs! Your support is vital for our work to promote responsible land-use decisions in Teton Valley, and WE THANK YOU!



Volunteers of the Year Announced During Mad Hatter

Thank you to everyone who attended the 9th Annual Mad Hatter held this September at Alpine Wines in Driggs. As always, the hats were ridiculous, the music was wonderful, the wine and beer were a hit, the food was scrumptious, the auction was thrilling, the space was perfect – all due to the tireless dedication of VARD's family of volunteers, donors and sponsors who made the evening a smash success for the ninth year in a row! A very special thanks goes to Denis & Linda duNann for donating their store and staff to make the evening sparkle.



Sandy Mason's landscape amnesia paid tribute to the beloved Butler trees in Driggs.

During the event, Teton County planners Curt Moore and Angie Rutherford received the Community Service Award for their tireless efforts on behalf of the county while our Volunteers of the Year were August Christensen and Joyce Zajac.

Our fantastic auction donors this year included the Hokin family and the Bitter End Yacht Club, Grand Targhee Resort, WorldCast Anglers, CG Sipe, John Fenn, Teton Water's Ranch, HD Dunn & Son Angus Ranch, Snowdrift Farms, Beartooth Capital, Yoga Healer Cate Stillman, Yoga Tejas, Ted Wells and Alpenglow Farms, RAD Recycling, 22 Tech & Web, Josh Volcko and Teton Fence & Pole Barn, Eric Soyland, Rick's Framing, Kathy & Eric Spitzer, and the Linn Ranch.

Finally, Tony Jewell's photographs graced the event posters; Grand Teton Brewing donated the beer; Ty Mack and 460 Bread brought the carbohydrates; Katie Alexander made the awards; Buol Heslin played the music; Natalie Volcko, Erica Linnell, Sarah McKeown, Emmett McCarthy Sr., Kay McCarthy, Tracy Delamater, Eric Spitzer, Rusty Cheney, Kent Werlin and Lori Bantekas all gave their time and talents to the event. *Thank you* to everyone who attended and participated, we couldn't do it without you! **VARD**

VARD welcomes new board members:

Molly Tyson & Sandy Mason

VARD is excited to announce our new board members Molly Tyson & Sandy Mason. As many of you know, Sandy has recently stepped down as VARD's executive director, and we are thrilled that he will be transitioning onto VARD's board of directors.

The following is a brief bio of Molly Tyson:

Molly grew up moving between the U.S.'s East and West Coasts until landing in Colorado for college where she received a BA in political science and journalism. Shortly after graduation she moved north to Teton Valley, drawn to the area by the mountains and unique community. Since moving here she has worked as a mountain guide, outdoor educator and park ranger, often traveling to mountain ranges around the western United States, South American and Antarctica for companies such as NOLS, Alpine Ascents International and Exum Mountain Guides. But she has always relished the chance to ski, climb, bike and hike in the local mountains. These days Molly spends the majority of her time working as a freelance writer for a wide variety of newspapers, magazines, websites and companies. She and her husband live in Victor. **VARD**



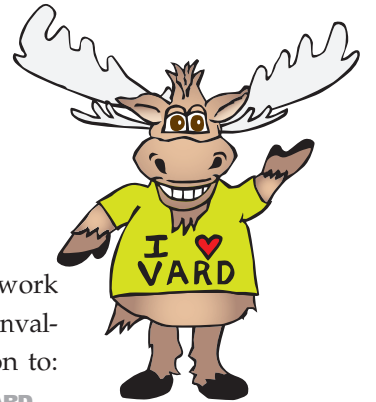
Sandy Mason



Molly Tyson

Thank You for your Financial Support

Please renew your support of VARD this holiday season with a tax-deductible donation. Or, give a gift membership for a loved one and we'll send him/her a holiday thank you card!



You can donate securely online using Network for Good through our website at www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org. Or, mail your donation to: VARD, PO Box 1164, Driggs, ID 83422. **VARD**



Support VARD While Holiday Shopping

Shop online through GoodShop.com and designate "Valley Advocates for Responsible Development" as your charity of your choice.

The site features the most up-to-date coupons and deals at over 2,400 popular online retailers, and a percent of every purchase will go to our cause! And when you use the Yahoo! powered **GoodSearch.com**, every time you search the Web about a penny goes to VARD. It's easy, and it makes a difference! **VARD**

Get Involved • Become a Member • TETON VALLEY NEEDS YOU!

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address _____

city _____

state _____ zip _____

e-mail _____

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- Sponsor \$500-\$999/year
- Patron..... \$250-\$499/year
- Friend..... \$100-\$249/year
- Supporter..... \$50-\$99/year
- Member.....\$25-\$49/year

Members will receive meeting invitations, regular newsletters and e-mail updates.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AND YOUR CHECK TO: **VARD** P.O. Box 1164, Driggs, ID 83422

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Shaping the Future of the West



ORTON FAMILY FOUNDATION

