

## **Questions for Candidates at the Teton County and Town of Jackson Candidate Forum on Water Resources.**

\* Of these ten questions, five will be asked during the forum

1) *If provided with appropriate and factually solid briefing materials, would you study those, and then annually travel to Ogden, Utah, (or invite and host the USFS Intermountain Region's leaders in Jackson Hole for this purpose), to advocate for sufficient and equitable recreation management and natural resource protection funding for the BTNF?*

2) *Would you take a leadership role, in partnership with Wyoming's federal congressional delegation, in crafting and shepherding an article of BLM-to-Teton County ~940-acre riparian parcels transfer legislation through the US Congress and across the signature desk of the next US President?*

3) In the fisheries section of the "white paper" describes how Snake River cutthroat trout are native to the Upper Snake River in Teton County – essentially, Jackson Hole's very own native trout – and how the Upper Snake watershed is unique for having robust native fish populations.

*What legacy would you like to leave to future generations with respect to native trout and their coldwater habitat in Jackson Hole?*

4) In the fisheries section of the "white paper" describes how Teton County, Wyoming hosts some of the finest native, naturally reproducing fish populations in the United States – and outlines current and future threats to this fishery including migration barriers, habitat degradation, nonnative fish species, water quality impairments, and warming stream temperatures.

*What role do you believe the Town / County can play in protecting these outstanding fishery resources in the face of these threats, and how would you personally seek to empower this role as an elected official?*

5) The "Water Resources White Paper" states, "Teton County, Wyoming, hosts some of the finest native, naturally reproducing fish populations in the United States... Yellowstone and Snake River cutthroat trout are icons of the Greater Yellowstone Region... In the Teton River drainage on the West side of the Tetons, interbreeding between native

cutthroat trout and non-native rainbow trout is seriously threatening the long-term persistence of the cutthroat trout...”

The National Park Service notes, “In the recent past, fishing for cutthroat trout has supported a \$36 million annual sport fishery [in Yellowstone].”

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/nature/Yellowstone-Cutthroat-Trout.htm>

*Given that recreation associated with Yellowstone and Snake River cutthroat trout provides significant cultural and economic value to the region, what do you see as the role of your desired office in ensuring the persistence and proliferation of this species here in Teton County, Wyoming?*

- 6) The “Water Resources White Paper” states that “efforts to protect [riparian habitats] have been piecemeal at best” despite the fact that riparian habitats are “more important to more species in the valley than all other habitat types combined.”

Sarah Bates, Senior Fellow with University of Montana’s Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, observes that “land use planning and decision-making is the responsibility of local officials, while water allocation happens through the decisions of many individuals who develop water based on their immediate and projected needs... Despite the many disconnects between water and land use planners, there is now widespread recognition of the need to think about these resources in a more integrated way: water-conscious land use planning and community-conscious water planning.”

<http://lawschool.unm.edu/nrj/volumes/52/1/bates.pdf>

*What do you see as the role of your desired office in water-conscious land use planning and community-conscious water planning? If elected, how will you address gaps in governance like those surrounding riparian habitat protections in Teton County, Wyoming?*

- 7) The “Water Recourses White Paper” suggests that wastewater is a primary source of contamination in Teton County, yet the County has minimal involvement in sewer and waste treatment infrastructure. Additionally, our drinking water source is an aquifer that has very limited natural protection from surface and groundwater discharge of wastewater.

*If elected, what stance would you take regarding the establishment of a formal agreement of roles and responsibilities between the Town of Jackson and Teton County regarding waste treatment, and would your stance be that the County should have an elevated role?*

- 8) The “Water Resources White Paper” indicates that nutrient contamination is likely contributing to nuisance levels of algae and plants in the Fish Creek watershed on the Westbank of the Snake River. While information regarding the proportional contribution of nutrient inputs into the drainage is forthcoming, wastewater and landscape fertilization are known to be human derived sources of nutrients into our surface and ground waters.

*If these sources of nutrients were shown to be degrading our local water resources, do you believe that comprehensive land development regulations should be used to curb nutrient inputs into our surface and groundwater by limiting landscape fertilization, or by requiring advanced treatment of wastewater in areas sensitive to contamination?*

- 9) The “Water Resources White Paper” indicates that wintertime flooding due to ice formation in Flat Creek is exacerbated due to the minimal development setback that have been required in the past, and are sometimes allowed through exemptions.

*Considering the large financial costs associated with flooding issues and the large degree of time and energy put towards such problems, if data could be used to show that existing setbacks would put said development at risk due to wintertime flooding would you support increasing setback distances from water courses for future development,*

- 10) The “Water Resources White Paper” describes the process by which winter ice develops in Flat Creek. Very cold air temperatures and lack of solar warming result in water cooling to the point that ice formation begins. In addition, contributions of relatively warm water inputs to Flat Creek are lacking within the Town of Jackson. Currently the precise role of each of the primary drivers have not been quantified, and therefore options for mitigation are somewhat unknown, but new research may help us better understand what options are available.

*If forthcoming research indicates that drinking water wells located on Karns Meadow, combined with impervious surfaces (rooftops, roads, etc.), and the current character of Cache Creek, which is in a sealed tube, contribute to ice formation in Flat Creek by isolating relatively warm groundwater from the Creek, what opportunities might you support to bring groundwater connectivity to surface water within the incorporated Town of Jackson?*