



**JACKSON HOLE LAND TRUST NEWS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Jackson Hole Land Trust Safeguards Public Access through the Conservation of an 18-Acre Parcel on High School Butte

Community access and wildlife habitat protected at a favorite local recreation spot

Jackson, WY – The Jackson Hole Land Trust announced today the purchase and protection of 18 acres of public access conservation land on High School Butte in the Town of Jackson. The parcel is located on the southwest-facing slopes of High School Butte and holds significant community, wildlife, and scenic conservation values. The conservation of the property will extinguish development rights, secure public access, and preserve an important refuge for wildlife above the light and noise from an increasingly dense residential area.

“While this parcel has been owned privately for decades, it has historically been accessed and used by the community as part of the High School Butte trails,” said Liz Long, interim co-director and director of conservation at the Jackson Hole Land Trust. “When this property went up for sale, we recognized it as a unique opportunity to formalize and safeguard public access to a piece of land that the community loves and uses regularly, while also protecting important wildlife acreage immediately adjacent to additional JHLT easement-protected properties.”

Accessible from the classic High School Butte switchbacks on the adjacent property owned by the Teton County School District, this parcel is home to multiple social trails and a rudimentary double track which have been used as unofficial hiking trails. The Jackson Hole Land Trust, working within a conservation-oriented management plan, will perform erosion mitigation, work to eliminate invasive plant species, and create a low impact loop trail for the community to enjoy.

“We know that access to nature and open space is critical to the mental and physical health of our community, especially during these challenging times,” explained Jenny Wolfrom Holladay, interim co-director and director of advancement and engagement at the Jackson Hole Land Trust. “High School Butte provides safe and easy access to the outdoors for families, students, and hikers of all ages. We are committed to inclusivity in conservation and believe that this protected public access property will be a place where everyone can seek out and experience the benefits of open space.”

The Jackson Hole Land Trust’s 2018-2023 Strategic Plan includes a community engagement goal in which the organization pledges to protect and create natural community spaces that have special meaning for people and provide access to land. Community conservation projects like R Park, Save the Block, and now High School Butte provide the community with access to open spaces that may have otherwise been private. They are a tangible result of the JHLT’s commitment to making land conservation relevant and beneficial to everyone in the community.

As with most conservation efforts, the High School Butte project has been a collaborative effort and was made possible in partnership with a local family who wishes to remain anonymous and their agent, Greg Prugh, who thoughtfully reached out to the JHLT in hopes of this conservation solution, as well as Teton County School District who willingly agreed to allow access via their High School Butte property. The purchase and protection of the 18-acre lot on High School Butte was funded through private protection dollars raised by the Jackson Hole Land Trust. Additional funding opportunities for the project exist.

The Jackson Hole Land Trust plans to host several focus groups with neighbors, partners, and community members over the upcoming winter to collect community feedback and ideas about property use and management. Trail maintenance, upgrades, and construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2021. The JHLT-owned High School Butte parcel will be subject to winter closures to protect and benefit wildlife.

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About the Jackson Hole Land Trust

The Jackson Hole Land Trust is a private, nonprofit organization that was established in 1980 to protect and steward the treasured landscapes of Northwest Wyoming including Fremont and Sublette counties. With over 56,000 acres protected, our vision is a legacy of protected open spaces, wildlife habitat, working lands, and community spaces that inspire current and future generations. For more information, please visit jhlandtrust.org.