



TETON SCIENCE SCHOOLS

2019 Annual Report



www.tetonscience.org
307.733.1313

Learning is in our nature

Teton Science Schools Impact Highlights

13,882

Students served by TSS mission

94,487

Student days of place-based education

\$1,882,470

In scholarships given across all TSS programs

5,059

Murie Ranch Visitors

12

Schools in Place Network

Enrollment Report 2018-2019

FISCAL YEAR 18/19	STUDENTS	STUDENT DAYS	SCHOLARSHIPS
Field Education			
Field Education Programs	7,142	31,441	\$278,954
AmeriCorps Service Members	28	1,878	N/A
Wildlife Expeditions	3,573	4,973	N/A
Graduate Program	13	4,290	\$91,837
Place Network	227	417	\$18,671
Teacher Learning Center	2,362	4,866	\$156,655
Mountain Academy - Jackson (formerly Journey School)			
School Year	168	29,400	\$1,189,138
Summer	67	335	
Mountain Academy - Teton Valley (formerly Teton Valley Community School)			
School Year	95	16,150	\$147,215
Summer	207	737	
Total	13,882	94,487	\$1,882,470
Total Visitors	5,274	5,300	
Total Attendees	920	4,191	
Total Impact	20,076	103,978	



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Executive Director

If you spend a week on our Jackson or Kelly Campuses, you're likely to see a ritual repeated again and again throughout the school year - our faculty and instructors sending a group of school-aged children back to their home after living, learning, and thriving in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. I like to reflect on what our new alumni might be taking on their bus or plane ride home and what sticks with them months and years later. While at Teton Science Schools (TSS), these young people had authentic connections with their classmates, educators, and the surrounding ecosystem. These students engaged in learning that followed their curiosity, helping them to develop their greater potential. At TSS these people discovered their power and ability to make positive change as courageous citizens. Their experiences were grounded in nature, which led to deeper connection, meaning and learning.

Over the last year, TSS impacted almost 20,000 people, from students, to visitors, to our network schools. While we can quantify our impact in thousands of students, the stories in the following pages demonstrate the impact our programs have on individual lives. Opening our PreK-12 school as one school across two campuses this fall, we announced our new school name, "Mountain Academy of Teton Science Schools," after a seven month community-driven process. For the first time in 25 years of our one-year graduate program, we are offering graduates a second-year practicum in our Mountain Academy classrooms to compliment their first year field teaching. This year we celebrate 20 years of wildlife tours enabling adults and families to journey deeper into the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem while funding youth programming across TSS. Learning is in our nature

regardless if our students are in the classroom, the community, or the wild.

Teton Science Schools means many things to our students, our families, our community, and to our alumni. Spend time on a campus or with TSS educators and you will likely experience warmth, optimism, and a feeling of empowerment. While "science" is our middle name, it represents so much more than STEM. Our students uncover and develop the tools to reveal truth through observation and reflection, drawing conclusions across disciplines and locations. Whether three years old in Pre-K or an adult learner, our students experience their world to understand their world so they can change our world for the better.

As we close the final year of our strategic plan, we've built the foundation for a resilient organization with a vision our world needs. Our world is ready for an expanded definition of student success. As the bus or plane returns our new TSS alumni back home, these young people have the agency to make positive change for themselves, their place, and the planet. We create optimism for how learning and our world can look different in and beyond the 21st century. Join us as we reimagine transformative place based learning.



Jimmy Chin & CJ Goulding Receive Murie Spirit of Conservation Awards

This year's recipients are empowering future generations of outdoor enthusiasts to steward our planet.

On Tuesday, August 13, over 250 people gathered at the Murie Ranch of Teton Science Schools to celebrate the legacy of the Muries and honor this year's recipients of the Murie Spirit of Conservation Awards, Jimmy Chin and CJ Goulding. TSS Executive Director Chris Agnew noted that these awards "recognize both achievement in conservation, and is a baton passing for our future stewards and leaders."

CJ Goulding received the Rising Leader Award. CJ is currently the Manager of Community Leadership Development for the Children and Nature Network. In his work with the Children & Nature Network and Fresh Tracks, CJ trains, mentors and supports a national network of over 360 diverse leaders who are changing systems and creating equitable access to nature in their communities. In his remarks CJ reflected that he was the "most successful classroom project ever." He credited his mentors and those who have invested in him over the years for creating a rising leader. "These people who had invested in me, and used nature and [the Murie Ranch] as a context, made me realize that I could do the same thing for others."

Jackson Hole icon Jimmy Chin received the Murie Spirit of Conservation award. Jimmy, who has called Jackson home since 1999, remarked that "this landscape has been a tremendous inspiration to me." From his humble beginnings living in a chicken coop in Magpie Acres, Jimmy has gone on to become one of the world's most recognized outdoor filmmakers. He and his wife, Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi, recently won an Academy Award for their documentary Free Solo. Through his films, photography and personal climbing achievements, Jimmy has inspired countless people to get outdoors and connect with the natural world. "I've come to understand people will protect what they love," he said. "I can only hope my work inspires people to get outside and to fall in love with our wild landscapes."

Love is a conduit for conservation. By sharing their love of the outdoors with others, both CJ and Jimmy are empowering future generations of outdoor enthusiasts to steward our planet. Jimmy charged those in the audience who recreate outdoors to "share that love, to continue to foster diversity in the outdoors, to instill that spirit of adventure and to help fight to preserve our wild places." ■

Wildlife Expeditions Celebrates 20 Years



In 1999, Teton Science Schools (TSS) was expanding and so too was the Jackson Hole community. The area was attracting tourists interested in visiting Wyoming's national parks. In order to better serve and educate visitors, TSS decided to expand into the world of eco-tourism. With the help of some board members and supporters, TSS purchased Great Plains Wildlife Institute from Tom Segerstrom. Great Plains Wildlife Institute was incorporated into the non-profit umbrella of TSS and renamed Wildlife Expeditions.

This year, Wildlife Expeditions is celebrating its 20th anniversary of connecting visitors to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and mission of TSS.

Over the past 20 years, vehicles have been upgraded, offices moved, and park visitation numbers have steadily risen, but Wildlife Expeditions' reputation for excellence has remained steadfast. With the support of administrative staff at TSS, excellent guides and strong community partners, Wildlife Expeditions continues to offer superlative educational tours for thousands of visitors each year.

"Excellent trip! Very informed guide in all areas - i.e. geology, animals and their habitat/characteristics, consequences of environmental shifts. He gave us a greater appreciation of responsibility to take care of our planet. I will come again and recommend it to others." -Tour Participant, 2001

Participants past and present often cite the high caliber of Wildlife Expeditions guides when reviewing their tours. The Wildlife Expeditions guide team is currently led by faculty Paul Brown and Kevin Taylor and lead guide Sarah Ernst, who began their careers with Wildlife Expeditions in 2001, 2002 and 2011, respectively. They have been instrumental in establishing Wildlife Expeditions as a leading wildlife tour provider and training up-and-coming guides. "I see my niche as bridging the sometimes gap between science and non-scientist. Working with Wildlife Expeditions is a great opportunity to make science and ecology more accessible to the general public," explained Kevin Taylor.

Guiding is a demanding job, requiring a vast, encyclopedic knowledge on a variety of topics (not to mention excellent customer service and long hours). Before becoming the Program Director of Wildlife Expeditions, Patrick Leary started as a guide. "I remember in my interview I was thrown a complete curveball: Can you list all the rodents in the GYE?," recalled Patrick. "It has persisted as a question I ask in interviews. It's a question that tests how you act on your feet when a guest asks you hard questions."

In an open letter written in 2001 describing the fledgling Wildlife Expeditions program, it states:

"Our biologist/guides are required to explore a variety of the following majortopics: biodiversity, differentiation of species, compensatory mortality, habitat fragmentation/degradation/

destruction, population ecology, fire ecology, forest succession, reproductive strategies, communities, ecosystems (esp. The GYE). Each program includes discussion and practice of viewing ethics including the use of optics, history of the national park(s), and the geologic history of the region. Human history, wildlife management, and current issues also play a role in most of our programs."

In addition to this laundry list of expectations and requirements, Wildlife Expeditions guides now have to navigate the parks with additional traffic and competition from other guiding companies. In 1999, Wildlife Expeditions was one of only three tour providers in Jackson. Today, 57 private guiding companies operate in Grand Teton National Park. "Over the last few years, it has been harder to find quiet, intimate moments with wildlife on pullouts or dirt roads as the number and size of other tour companies has increased," said Sarah Ernst. Although increased competition means guides have to work harder for solitude, guides agreed that more people in our national parks is ultimately a good thing. "The number of guiding companies shows that people are interested in learning and interested in wildlife," said Paul Brown. "The bright spot is that more people want to come and learn about this ecosystem."

During its first season of operation (November 15, 1999-November 15, 2000), Wildlife Expeditions ran 523 trips and served 2,694 participants. There were four primary tours

offered (Sunrise/Sunset, Discovery Expedition, Wolf and Bear and Great Parks) as well as custom tours. In 2001, the Wildlife Expeditions catalog also boasted Multi-Day Seminars including, "In Search of the Elusive Wild Mushroom," "The Stuff of the Earth" and "Bats: Myth and Reality." As demand for these types of seminars waned over the years, Wildlife Expeditions developed new tours and partnerships in the valley. In December 2014, Wildlife Expeditions began operating snowcoach tours in Yellowstone National Park. This quickly has become one of Wildlife Expeditions most popular tours as it offers visitors a truly unique opportunity to explore Yellowstone in winter. Today, Wildlife Expeditions offers seven different single-day tours as well as private, custom and multi-day tours for those wanting a more personalized or in-depth experience.

In 1999, there were four vehicles in the Wildlife Expeditions fleet, including three Chevy Suburbans and one 15-passenger Ford van. When Kevin Taylor joined in 2002, a second 15-passenger van had been added, bringing the total number of vehicles to five. At that time, Wildlife Expeditions was working out of an alley-way garage and office space on Willow Street. "I remember having to shovel out vehicles before trips after the plow in the alley had plowed berms in front of the vehicles that didn't fit in the garage bays (three bays for five vehicles)," said Kevin.

Wildlife Expeditions currently houses their vehicles in a warehouse south of town (no shoveling required). The suburbans have been replaced with Mercedes Sprinter vans. In addition to the Mercedes Sprinters, the fleet has grown to include four snowcoaches. In October, the team will move to a new warehouse in Wilson, "which will hopefully launch us into the next 20 years," said Patrick Leary.

Wildlife Expeditions vehicles travel all over the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, from Mormon Row to the Lamar Valley. Trips range from half-day to multi-day tours, and are enjoyed by participants of all ages. While single and half day tours expose the greatest number of participants to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, multi-day tours provide the greatest opportunity for guides to develop a guest's connection to the wilderness and wildlife of the ecosystem. "The multi-day trips are where we really



make connections with people,” said Paul Brown. “When we’re doing multi-day trips, we have the ability to do things differently... we can be out in the Hayden Valley early in the morning. We get to spend time with people and really get to know them over the course of a week.”

Given the hours guides spend in the GYE, they have become attuned to changes in the ecosystem over the years. Among many observations, guides have noted a decrease in the moose population, the effects of wolf reintroduction on elk behavior, heightened controversy over hunting regulations and grizzly delisting and the growth of regenerating forests after events such as the Berry Fire. As climate change and human development threaten the future of this ecosystem and others, Wildlife Expeditions guides and staff feel a growing responsibility to connect visitors to the landscape. “As we continue having species go extinct or public lands shrink, I think it’s increasingly important for people to establish emotional connections to the outdoors or to wild animals because otherwise they’re viewed as expendable resources,” said Patrick Leary.

Perhaps now more than ever, there is a sense of urgency to see and interact with our natural world. “I think that as our lives become increasingly digital and isolated from the natural world — and each other — the American psyche is craving the authentic, wild experiences we can still find in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.” said Sarah Ernst. For Wildlife Expeditions guides, facilitating these experiences is one of the most rewarding parts of the job. “It is especially affirming when participants contact me sometimes after they return home, and let me know how they

view their wild places and backyards with different eyes after having experienced the GYE, and how they have gotten involved with conservation projects in their area,” said Kevin Taylor.

As Wildlife Expeditions looks to the future, there will undoubtedly be challenges to overcome and pressures to compete in an already saturated market. But Patrick Leary believes Wildlife Expeditions is positioned well to weather any challenges and maintain a position of excellence in Jackson Hole. “We have great support from TSS and the community, an amazing team of guides who are dedicated to this place and an awesome team of administrative staff,” he said.

One thing that’s for certain is the staying power of the wildlife tour. When asked if *Planet Earth* or other wildlife videos would ever compete with the physical experience of going on a wildlife tour, Kevin Taylor responded:

“While watching a video, you can’t smell sagebrush, aspen bark, or elk urine. On a video, you can’t feel the breeding grunts of a male bison deep in your chest. You can’t experience the passionate energy of a naturalist guide who may inspire your child to become an ecologist. You can’t feel the January winds and walk through the snow to help understand the challenges that these animals face every winter. You can’t ask questions of a local guide about what you are seeing and experiencing. You can’t eat berries from the same plant species that you just watched a black bear eat. Shall I continue?”

Enough said. Here’s to the next 20 years of wildlife tours at TSS. ■



Students from Columbia, Missouri explore String Lake by canoe. To learn more about their visit, go to bit.ly/visittingschools

Graduate Student Fellows Learn Alongside Their Students



“...it is my students who inspire me to be a lifelong learner.”

Katie O'Connell, Graduate Program

With the opening of the school year this fall, Teton Science Schools' Graduate Program alumni Katie O'Connell and Brooks Taylor became the first students to enroll in a second year program as Graduate Student Fellows. As a part of the second year experience at TSS, Katie and Brooks are both teaching at the Teton Valley campus of Mountain Academy.

Fellows of the new second year program grow, learn and teach at the TSS independent school while completing a masters in education (M.Ed.) with a concentration in place-based education from Antioch University New England. Through teaching and service, graduate fellows gain skills as place-based educators and educational leaders.

Katie O'Connell graduated from Northeastern University after completing a B.S. in Environmental Studies and Elementary Education. After her undergrad years she leapt right into the outdoor education world, but in an uncommon urban setting. Her task was teaching kids of all ages in and around Boston how to be an Urban Farmer. With the kids and vegetables by her side, Katie grew to love the outdoor teaching setting and yearned to know more about place-based education. With that excitement Katie joined the Graduate Program at TSS where she learned about using the world around her as a classroom. Katie shared, “This year I am excited to learn with my students

in the Kindergarten and first grade classroom. It is my students who inspire me to be a lifelong learner.”

Brooks Taylor began pursuing place-based education as an undergraduate at Gettysburg College, earning a Bachelor's degree in American History. After graduating, Brooks worked as an active travel guide for Backroads, leading biking and hiking trips across the United States. Hungry for more adventure and inspired by Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery, Brooks and a friend built a wooden canoe and paddled the entirety of the Missouri-Mississippi river system from Montana to the Gulf of Mexico. Upon completion of the river trip, Brooks enrolled at Teton Science Schools' Graduate Program. This year, Brooks will be teaching alongside faculty in the Middle School on the Teton Valley campus.

Brooks stated, “I am so happy to be able to continue my education while simultaneously teaching and having the opportunity to stay within TSS.”

Second-year students in the TSS Graduate Program can now earn their degree either through this hands-on fellowship experience or through second-year classroom-based options at the University of Wyoming or other partner universities. ■

Former JHSE Participant Returns to TSS as Graduate Student

In 2015, Angélica (Angie) Toledo Ríos traveled from her hometown of La Paz, Baja California Sur. to participate in Jackson Hole Science Expeditions, TSS' flagship program started by Ted Major in 1967. Four years later, Angie has returned to Teton Science Schools as a member of the Graduate Program with a degree in marine biology from the Autonomous University of Baja California Sur (AUBCS).

Angie is a passionate educator and a lifelong learner — she has been teaching math, chemistry and biology since she was 15 years old. In addition to her work in the sciences, Angie has been a scout since 2006, and leads her community section for 14 to 18-year-old boys and girls. In her free time, you can find her reading adventure or romance books, listening to music or just having a good cup of coffee.

TSS: Describe your experience with JHSE. What were your major take-aways from the program?

Angie: Living the JHSE experience was the best source of inspiration for me at that time in my life. As a freshman in biology, immersing myself completely in the phases of the scientific method, learning to really observe, questioning everything, and carrying out an investigation, made me return home with more encouragement to learn. At the end of the program, the experience of knowing an ecosystem completely different from that of my city and my country marked me forever. But I was also amazed by the passion and dedication of my instructors. It became my goal not only to be a person of science but to apply what I learned to achieve a change in my community.

TSS: You have been making change in your community through scouts for over 10 years. How has your involvement with scouts impacted your life? Do you think place-based education plays a role in scouts?

Angie: Being part of the scout movement was the way I approached nature for the first time. There I learned to appreciate the beauty of plants, and to respect and protect wildlife. To spend the day in the field, to camp, and to value natural resources. I learned to be curious and hungry for knowledge and to develop new skills. I learned to work as a team, to take care of the little ones, to share shelter and food. I learned to be part of a small community, my team, my troop, or my group. I learned about leadership. I learned to generate projects and support those of others. As a Rover Scout I learned the importance of community service and how to contribute to creating a better world. And now, as a scout leader, I want to return a little of what I learned: Values, skills and a lot of love.

Definitely place-based education is an important and necessary

part for scouts. The best experiences and the greatest moments and learnings always occurred in the field or in the service. That is why a good part of my inspiration to come here is the young adults and their immense desire to learn and explore--I want to be that person who provides them with a space to learn, enjoy and engage.

TSS: Has your personal experience as a woman in science shaped the way you teach and mentor girls?

Angie: Yes, academia is a place controlled mostly by men, and I have seen how during my studies my superiors have displaced me to give my place to others, and I have seen how my voice can be ignored, even as part of student councils. But I have also seen incredible support from my teachers and from scientific institutions, and non-governmental organizations, who encourage me to continue studying, to carry out projects and to compete for opportunities.

This has led me to instill equality in my groups, and to empower girls not to be afraid of choosing the path less traveled by women, but to follow their dreams and be a good citizen.

TSS: What are you hoping to gain from the Graduate Program (aside from a degree!)?

Angie: A lot of experience teaching outside the classroom. I want to compare and learn about the differences between science teaching in Mexico and the United States. As well as enrich my cultural knowledge and improve my English level.

I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to live and learn in this place, as well as to be part of the Muries' legacy. I am sure that this program has a lot to offer, beyond what I can imagine. And I'm looking forward to knowing where it can take me. After all, the mountains called me again, and here I am, far from the ocean, to learn a little more. ■



TSS Aims to Improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Across Institution

As part of our three-year Strategic Plan, in the fall of 2017 TSS undertook its first-ever organization-wide effort to improve diversity, equity and inclusion across the institution. Increasing diversity and inclusion have been shown to create stronger organizations, and is a priority for our entire organization.

An essential first step in this effort was a culture and climate audit, which would gather input from students, program participants, staff and TSS Board members. Among other concepts, the audit, administered annually by the Avarna Group, helped us assess our organization's ability to interact effectively across various dimensions of diversity, including socio-economic class, race, gender, sexuality, work ethic, body size, religion, etc.

The Operations Team is responsible for responding to the audit by creating and stewarding the implementation of the Staff Culture and Climate Action Plan. Based on the data from the first report, the TSS Operations Team determined that building greater cultural

competency of all staff, AmeriCorps members and graduate students would have a meaningful impact in improving the staff experience for the entire organization.

Since September 2018, the TSS Executive and Operations teams, the designated leadership of TSS, have deliberately built capacity and led by example by 1) piloting strategies to increase cultural competence among institutional leaders and 2) refining systems and tailoring rollout to meet the needs of individual departments and teams. All TSS staff have also been invited to a series of discussions around the outcomes of the culture and climate audit.

Next steps for keeping this dialogue going include quarterly sessions for all staff to explore identity and privilege and gender based affinity groups for the TSS Executive team and TSS Operations to explore how gender bias is impacting their teams and leadership.

The Place Network is a collaborative network of K-12 schools that connect learning and communities. Launched in 2016, the Network brings TSS' innovative teaching practices, enduring relationships, integrated curriculum, and global awareness to students and teachers across the nation; specifically rural areas, where many communities are fighting declining populations, geographic isolation and challenging economic situations.

Place Network partners with small rural schools and districts in a multi-year professional development experience. This includes multiple on-site school visits, virtual workshops, sharing online learning communities, sample curriculum and leadership engagement. Place Network is not a specific curriculum. Rather, it leaves schools with an embedded and contextualized place-based education framework.

After its first full operating school year (2018-19), the Network supported 12 schools, impacted

over 600 students and guided over 100 educators and administrators. Our Place Network team has spent thousands of hours traveling, coaching, reflecting, teaching, video-conferencing and most importantly, learning.

At the end of June, members of the Place Network team convened in Jackson to reflect on and celebrate the past year's successes while also envisioning the future. What was uncovered and shared over the three-day retreat exemplified the team's commitment to excellence, growth, reflective practice, inclusivity, data-driven thinking and providing meaningful pathways for students to make a difference in their own lives and within their communities.

The Place Network is welcoming three new schools for the 2019-2020 school year. To learn more about the Place Network, visit www.tetonscience.org/what-we-do/school-network/

Place Network Turns One: A Year Worth Celebrating

As students, faculty and staff go about their days on our campuses, TSS is also building a collaborative network of next-generation schools and reimagining rural education across the United States.



Members of the Place Network team.

Statement of Financial Position (Unaudited)

ASSETS	Ending May 31, 2019	Ending May 31, 2018	Ending May 31, 2017	Ending May 31, 2016
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$1,071,482	\$210,270	\$436,613	\$132,197
Accounts Receivable	\$975,261	\$635,972	\$625,992	\$556,511
Inventory & Prepaid Expenses	\$209,699	\$189,308	\$142,982	\$284,716
Investments	\$17,930,612	\$19,309,704	\$19,201,867	\$17,781,818
Property & Equipment (net)	\$32,786,852	\$33,154,683	\$33,678,993	\$34,083,264
Total Assets	\$52,973,906	\$53,499,937	\$54,086,447	\$52,838,506
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS				
Liabilities				
Accounts Payable	\$346,999	\$489,281	\$490,187	\$401,607
Accrued Expenses	\$1,814,034	\$1,304,716	\$393,546	\$423,289
Course Deposits	\$1,281,433	\$1,152,995	\$1,397,817	\$1,208,719
Notes Payable	\$299,538	\$714,240	\$1,869,091	\$2,657,711
Total Liabilities	\$3,742,004	\$3,661,232	\$4,150,641	\$4,691,326
Net Assets	\$49,231,902	\$49,838,705	\$49,935,806	\$48,147,180
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$52,973,906	\$53,499,937	\$54,086,447	\$52,838,506

Statement of Activity - Fiscal Year Ending May 31, 2019 (Unaudited)

	Unrestricted Operating Fund			
SUPPORT & REVENUE	2019	2018	2017	2016
Program Tuition & Fees	\$10,869,847	\$10,465,612	\$10,760,044	\$10,374,326
Contributions	\$2,520,264	\$2,885,854	\$3,135,045	\$2,573,412
Investment Income	\$978,861	\$897,612	\$859,676	\$759,723
Other Income	\$652,021	\$502,542	\$390,628	\$321,512
Total Support & Revenue	\$15,020,993	\$14,751,620	\$15,145,393	\$14,028,973
EXPENSES				
Program Services	\$12,348,770	\$12,012,781	\$11,962,966	\$11,655,044
Management & Operations	\$1,672,240	\$1,378,854	\$1,444,711	\$1,419,557
Fundraising	\$596,455	\$573,319	\$601,128	\$483,714
Total Expenses	\$14,617,465	\$13,964,954	\$14,008,805	\$13,558,315
Capital Investments	\$517,238	\$833,632	\$1,141,432	\$444,609
Net Surplus (Deficit)	-\$113,710	-\$46,966	-\$4,844	\$26,049



TSS summer camp students search for macroinvertebrates at Boyle's Hill.



700 COYOTE CANYON ROAD
JACKSON, WY 83001

tetonscience.org
307.733.1313



Teton Science Schools is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization operating year-round in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and Teton Valley, Idaho.

Teton Science Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, creed or sexual orientation in any of its policies or programs.

Operating in partnership with Grand Teton National Park and as a permittee of the Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee National Forests.

