

April 4, 2022

Teton County Board of Commissioners  
P.O. Box 3594  
Jackson, WY 83001



Re: Support of Teton County Wildlife Feeding Land Development Regulation (5.1.3 and 5.2.2) amendments and removal

Dear Board of County Commissioners,

BearWise Jackson Hole (BearWise JH) is a partnership between the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Grand Teton National Park, Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department, to sustain wild bear populations while minimizing human-bear conflicts in Teton County, Wyoming. This collaboration has existed for >16 years. Our mission is to Keep Bears Wild and People Safe. As a team, we develop outreach materials, send seasonal press communications, coordinate actions with other agencies and organizations, and own and operate the BearWise JH Trailer which is equipped for community education. We work from the principles of [Living in Bear Country](#) from BearWise Wyoming.

We are writing regarding the proposed amendment of Teton County's Wildlife Feeding Land Development Regulation (LDR). Individuals on our team have been closely involved in helping County Planning staff craft language to amend the current Wildlife Feeding LDR, provided data and expertise on wildlife conflicts, and we are supportive of the proposed amendments to Section 5.1.3 and removal of Section 5.2.2. We understand that implementation of the amended LDR will require a multi-effort approach to reach the highest success in reducing wildlife conflict on private lands. Because of this, and given our team's breadth of expertise and resources, we are prepared to support the County in their efforts to preserve and protect the area's ecosystem by incentivizing compliance with the Wildlife Feeding LDR.

To those ends, a recent effort that BearWise JH has undertaken is to employ a staff person that will serve the BearWise JH team primarily on private lands. This person will be administered by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation, while functioning as the first dedicated BearWise JH staff person. This employee will operate under the principles of BearWise and will follow an ethic of goodwill and support for the community. Three areas of responsibility for this person are 1) outreach with the community and homeowners, 2) coordination, support, and liaising with partners, and 3) managing an incentive fund that will exist for the purchase of goods such as bear-resistant trash cans to reduce wildlife attractants.

These efforts will all be conducted under the principles of Bear Wise Wyoming, which are consistent with the USFWS Bear Smart assessment recommendations to reduce attractants and increase community education. The main goal of this position is to be the primary private sector source of assistance and expertise to landowners and business operators in Teton County, Wyoming seeking to comply with town and county wildlife protection standards and regulations.

Specifically, the BearWise JH job responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Communicate with the community, partners, and officials to ensure efficiency and reduce redundancy between partners working towards the same conservation outcomes. Present and

report to partners the various activities being conducted throughout the County to reduce wildlife conflicts.

- Manage an incentive fund that will be used to provide materials to home and business owners needing assistance to purchase or build bear-resistant items or structures such as trash cans, electrified fences, and bird feeders. Contributions to the fund will likely come from agency partners, foundations, and individual donors.
- Assist homeowners, property managers, neighborhoods, and community groups to build bear-resistant items or structures in compliance with County Regulations, enlisting volunteers as needed to help.
- Provide property assessments for interested homeowners to inform residents how they can reduce attractants on their property.
- Assist partners and enlist volunteers to help with various programs including crabapple tree reduction, garden and fruit harvest, electric fence installation, outreach events, and other efforts to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.

We commend the County for the effort of amending the Wildlife Feeding LDR and we believe this is a positive step in securing both the safety of bears and humans while helping bears remain wild, seeking native food sources in native habitat. We understand that implementing new, broader regulations can be challenging and it is our hope that this BearWise JH staff position will provide relief for the County, understanding our goal to reduce conflicts with bears. The agencies and organization of BearWise JH are the only constant in the management of these resources and are invested in a long-term commitment in these goals. Landscape-scale changes in human behavior often occur slower than public opinion, but the decades of work in grizzly bear recovery by these agencies demonstrate that success is possible.

Please reach out to any of our representatives with questions about BearWise JH or our plans. We have recently included Teton County staff to participate in our efforts and invite the County to formally join us as a BearWise JH partner.

Sincerely,



Jason Wilmot  
Blackrock District Ranger  
Bridger-Teton National Forest



Palmer "Chip" Jenkins  
Superintendent  
Grand Teton National Park &  
John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway

*Renee Seidler*

Renee Seidler  
Executive Director  
Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation



Michael Boyce  
Large Carnivore Biologist  
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