



Flat Creek Blueways Project LegacyWorks Group 2018 Report

Prepared for the Snake River Fund by

LEGACYWORKS
group

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Introduction

The purpose of LegacyWorks Group (LWG)'s analysis was to identify and assess potential projects that could improve Flat Creek as it flows through the Town of Jackson. The Snake River Fund (SRF) has been working to advance objectives along Flat Creek through its Flat Creek Blueways Project (FCBP). This report was undertaken to advance the FCBP. We set out to identify avenues to achieve the following:

- Improve instream and riparian habitat along the creek
- Incentivize low impact development and redevelopment along Flat Creek
- Improve community access to Flat Creek and surrounding corridor
- Make Flat Creek part of the community's identity (community stream)
- Expand green infrastructure for stormwater treatment, water quality improvements, and flood control (the working stream)

We conducted our analysis through a mixture of in person interviews, on site visits, and property research. Conversations were conducted with landowners, conservation specialists, developers, appraisers, elected officials, and public staff. Potential projects were identified through these interviews and then followed up on to test viability, project overall costs, and identify potential funding sources and project partners. During this process, LegacyWorks took steps to advance many of these projects, including applying for grants, convening collaborative meetings, and reconnecting with property owners about feasibility of projects. Projects were assessed based on cost, feasibility, and impact. Those assessments appear as project snapshots and are summarized in the project matrix included in this report.

Each project snapshot includes a description of the SRF's role and is intended to illuminate how SRF may choose to contribute resources, both financial and staff time, to a potential project independent of, or in collaboration with, the FCBP team. LWG welcomes the opportunity to discuss how we can work collaboratively to advance any of the projects identified in this report.

Background and Challenges

Flat Creek's headwaters are pristine and offer world-class fishing. Originating in the Gros Ventre Range, Flat Creek flows through the National Elk Refuge before making its way through Jackson and down to the Snake River. Despite Jackson's reputation as a conservation leader, Flat Creek is somewhat of an anomaly once it reaches town. In town the creek is often ignored, with businesses facing away from it, and residents rarely interacting with the sections that flow past commercial properties.

Our analysis identified four key challenges that currently face Flat Creek and lead to its condition through the Town of Jackson: i) impaired water quality, ii) impaired riparian and instream habitat, iii) lack of public attention, and iv) poor creek side aesthetics.

Water Quality

Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality classifies Flat Creek as an impaired waterway due to excessive sedimentation in the creek. Flat Creek's status as an impaired waterway is inextricably linked to stormwater quality. As the Town of Jackson continues to grow, this problem will worsen.

Habitat

A lack of habitat also contributes to Flat Creek's impaired status. Development pressure has eliminated much of the riparian vegetation that serves as a natural filter for the creek and that provides critical wildlife habitat. In the channel itself, large amounts of sediment have filled in gravel and cobblestone bottoms, eliminating macro invertebrate and fish habitat.

Lack of Public Attention

In spite of widespread community support for Flat Creek, the creek has often times suffered from a lack of focused interest with the result being that elected officials have taken very little action to improve the creek.

Aesthetic Appeal

Because commercial properties have ignored the creek, it is generally treated as a storage area. Dumpsters are typically pushed up against the banks and leak trash into the waterway. This has the compounding effect of making the creek less attractive for future development and dissuading public use.

SRF and LWG are both driven by the belief that communities thrive when they have healthy waterways that residents and visitors can access and enjoy. Our analysis and recommendations are driven by a desire to understand the most actionable steps that can be taken to improve Flat Creek for the benefit of the Town of Jackson.

Summary of Results

Our analysis showed that there are a number of low-cost, high-impact projects available to advance SRF priorities along Flat Creek. Some of these projects could be acted on in short order, some will take longer be put in motion. Given the potential to have a transformative influence on a high-priority waterway, we recommend that SRF make a

concerted effort to advance the FCBP. Our specific recommendations for how to advance the FCBP are summarized below.

The highest impact will come by working with the Town of Jackson to make water quality and stream friendly redevelopment a priority. Without involvement by an outside party like SRF, TOJ will not lead these initiatives. With outside support, TOJ can change the trajectory of Flat Creek.

The Town of Jackson has shown an interest in working to improve Flat Creek, but it has often failed to give the creek attention or to design policies and legislation that would improve the creek's condition. With basic actions, TOJ could significantly alter the trajectory of Flat Creek with significant impacts on redevelopment of commercial properties along the creek and water quality through town.

Through multiple conversations with staff and elected officials, it is apparent that housing and transportation efforts taking up most of the agenda prevents TOJ from focusing on Flat Creek. In multiple interviews, staff and elected officials expressed a desire to work on the creek, but a lack of capacity prevents meaningful action. SRF and other local partners will need to play the role of teeing up manageable projects and decisions that TOJ can undertake with limited staff time. This will involve pushing Flat Creek issues through planning processes, taking care of the administrative and technical planning of projects that can be time intensive at the outset, and coordinating meetings and agendas. Put simply, TOJ needs local partners to keep the community's attention on the creek and to make it easy for staff to participate.

There are two critical efforts to improve Flat Creek that the Town of Jackson can immediately push forward: i) the Flat Creek overlay, designed to incentivize re-development that improves interaction with the creek, and ii) improved stormwater management, the critical challenge facing water quality in Flat Creek. Through FCBP SRF has already begun the critical steps for both of these projects and we have worked to advance them through this analysis. SRF should continue to lead both efforts moving forward as both are low-cost, high-impact efforts that are at the core of improving the creek.

Public and private funding streams are available for Flat Creek work

Numerous public entities are engaged with Flat Creek and have funding that can be utilized on stream projects. Flat Creek's status as an impaired waterway makes any projects that can improve water quality and streamside habitat eligible for funding through the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. Teton Conservation District has also identified Flat Creek as a priority and is likely to be a funding partner on projects. TCD serves as the primary conduit to WYDEQ funding sources. Continuing to work with and coordinate with TCD on projects is essential to making this funding available.

The Town of Jackson is starting to address stormwater management and can participate or lead projects that help manage stormwater for the community. Finally, Wyoming Game and Fish Department has some funding available for habitat projects, but is more likely to play a role helping to identify and apply for other funding sources. WYGFD will be the lead agency on instream habitat projects.

Private support for this work can be mobilized in a variety of manners. Flat Creek is an iconic western stream and philanthropic support for projects can come for projects that have obvious public benefit. Private landowners can also be engaged as cost-sharers on projects that directly lead to enhanced property aesthetics. Finally, there is an opportunity to engage impact investors on commercial property acquisitions. While these acquisitions are unique and will require further investigations, we believe that there is enough value creation potential to attract impact investments.

There is an opportunity to work with existing private landowners on SRF Flat Creek goals. Many of these approaches will enhance private land values and result in community benefits via stream improvements.

Given that the vast majority of creek side properties are privately owned, improving community interaction with the creek will necessarily involve working with private landowners. Fortunately, there are numerous opportunities to do this and many willing landowners. These projects range in complexity from full-blown acquisitions to simple aesthetic improvements along the creek. The easiest first step will be to engage with private landowners on cost share project that improve streamside aesthetics and enhance property values.

There is an opportunity to attract impact investment dollars to Flat Creek acquisitions of commercial property. However, there are limited listings at any given time and it is more actionable to partner with existing landowners on redevelopment projects.

High property values in Jackson make engaging in acquisitions difficult. However, for commercial properties, **proximity to Flat Creek typically depresses values** because of mandatory setbacks. There is a significant value creation opportunity by re-developing properties in a way that turns the creek into an asset, particularly along the creek stretch from the National Elk Refuge to Karns Meadow. Adoption of the draft Flat Creek overlay or any other development measures that could provide development bonuses along the creek would amplify this value creation potential.

There is a limited stock of commercial properties along Flat Creek and they do not change ownership often. Engaging in an impact investment will require a steady presence tracking the real estate market to evaluate opportunities and engage potential investors. This is a role that lies out of SRF's traditional expertise and might be better suited for another community partner. A more time appropriate way of engaging

private properties is to develop incentive programs to encourage property owners to participate in actions that improve habitat, aesthetics, and water quality.

Projects that increase public access along Flat Creek through the Town of Jackson are likely to be contentious and difficult to engage in.

There are currently public access sites along Flat Creek that provide direct access to the creek. Unfortunately, many of the remaining potential sites are in sensitive habitat and are likely to be contentious. A public backlash has already arisen to a long-planned bike path along Flat Creek in Karns Meadow and WYGFD has expressed some concerns about providing more access sites. While there is some debate about the actual wildlife impacts of future access sites, it will remain a contentious issue. A less contentious approach is to improve the public experience along the creek between access points. We recommend that SRF and community partners launch this effort by working with property owners to improve the creek aesthetic by removing sources of trash flowing into the Flat Creek.

The one access improvement that would not be likely to draw public scrutiny is a wheelchair accessible fishing site at the current site of the Dairy Queen sign.

Next Steps

This report was designed to help lay out a course of action for SRF as it seeks to advance the FCBP. At the outset of the analysis both SRF and LWG recognized that available funding limited the scope of work that could realistically be taken on. We have attempted to make recommendations for action that reflect this reality.

In the short-term, we recommend that SRF focus its efforts on helping TOJ advance efforts to adopt the Flat Creek overlay and to devise stormwater solutions that address water quality issues with the creek.

Moving forward, we recommend that SRF work with partners like TCD, Trout Unlimited, and Wyoming Game and Fish to build out incentive/cost share programs (e.g. dumpster enclosures) for local landowners to improve creek aesthetics. Many of these projects can be launched via relatively low cost pilot initiatives, though they will require staff time to coordinate. Launching these initiatives can have a catalytic effect on the creek by encouraging property owners to think about how they can turn the creek into an asset. We recommend that SRF work with partners from the Trout Friendly Lawns initiative to raise a small amount of funding to seed this initiative. A modest, \$5,000-10,000 pilot would be appropriate and could likely be funded in part through a Community Foundation grant.

Longer-term initiatives can also be enacted by SRF. One of the most notable deficiencies that we have identified with the creek is the lack of a long-term vision for the creek.

While many partners and agencies work with the creek, there is not a shared long-term vision that everyone is working towards. As a result, work is often carried out piecemeal to address immediate concerns and without coordination. SRF is well positioned to work with partners to develop that long-term vision of the creek. The re-engineering plan that we have outlined appears to be an excellent way to start this dialogue and to develop workable plans for the creek.

- Indicates High Impact
- Indicates Impact

Flat Creek Impact Areas

Readiness Factors

Project or Initiative

1	Flat Creek Overlay
2	Stormwater Master Plan
3	Stormwater Utility
4	Flat Creek Forum
5	Powderhorn Stormwater
6	Plan Re-Engineer Flat Creek
7	Riparian Buffer
8	Connect Stormwater to Karns Meadow
9	Impact Investment
10	Dumpster Enclosure
11	El Tequila
12	Karns Meadow Park

Habitat	Development	Public Access	Community Identity	Green Infrastructure	Water Quality
●	●	●	●	●	●
●	●		●	●	●
●			●	●	●
●	●	●	●	●	●
●			●	●	●
●	●		●	●	●
●				●	●
●			●	●	●
●	●	●	●	●	●
●		●	●	●	●
●	●	●	●	●	●

Partners	Feasibility	Funding Sources	Relative Cost
Town of Jackson, Teton County	High	Town of Jackson	\$
TOJ, TCD	High	SPET, TCD	\$\$
TOJ, TCD, TU	High	WYDEQ	\$\$
TOJ, TCD, TU, WYGFD, FCWID	High	Community Foundation, TCD	\$
TOJ, TCD, WYDEQ	Medium	WYDEQ	\$\$
WYGFD, TCD, TOJ	Medium	Laura Jane Musser Fund, WYGFD, TCD	\$\$
TOJ, TCD	Medium	WYDEQ	\$\$
TOJ, TCD, WYDOT, WYDEQ	Medium	TOJ, TCD, WYDEQ	\$
WYGFD, TCD	Medium	Private impact investor, WYDEQ	\$\$\$\$
Private landowners, Teton Conservation District	High	Community Foundation	\$
TCD, WYGFD, WYDEQ, TU	Medium	TCD, WYGFD, WYDEQ, TU, Private landowner	\$
JHLT, TOJ, Teton County	Low	JHLT	\$

Project Snapshot: Improve Stormwater Infrastructure into Karns Meadow

Project Goal: Connect the stormwater runoff pipe south of the Broadway bridge at the corner of the Staples parking lot down to wetland settling ponds in Karns Meadow to ensure treatment of the runoff before entering the creek.

Project Description: The Broadway bridge runoff pipe send runoff from the five-way intersection through a unmaintained settlement basin directly into Flat Creek, contributing significant pollution and sediment loads into the creek. The rodeo grounds settling ponds were originally designed and constructed to capture the volume of water from that pipe. Unfortunately they were never connected, though WYDOT did install a mechanical treatment mechanism that captures some sediment prior to it flowing into the creek. There remains some concern that this treatment is not up to the same standard as the rodeo grounds settling ponds. Connecting the outlet to the ponds would deliver stormwater via a ditch from the current outflow and ensure more treatment of the stormwater.

SRF Role: Advocate on behalf of the improvements with TOJ, help apply for funding via WYDEQ/Teton Conservation District.

Community Partners: Town of Jackson Engineering, Teton Conservation District, WY Department of Transportation, WY Department of Environmental Quality

Project Background: WYDOT took over the 5-way intersection when it completed improvements in 2015 and upon this happening, a new stormwater filter was installed. Prior to that point, stormwater appeared to be entering Flat Creek untreated. There is some question as to what entity is responsible for the maintenance of the stormwater filter. Regardless, here is a general consensus that, while WYDOT's treatment is helping creek quality, pushing the water down to the settling ponds would improve overall discharge quality into Flat Creek. Jackson Hole Land Trust holds a conservation easement on the Karns Meadow wetland ponds and would need to signal a willingness.

Impact: Reduce sediment and pollutant load into Flat Creek with the overall goal of contributing to the removal of Flat Creek's status as an impaired waterway. .

Threat: The perceived benefits to Flat Creek could be outweighed by the overall cost of putting in new infrastructure in the way of a runoff conveyance pipe. Preparing a better understanding of stormwater quality entering the creek at this point would help to convey the benefits to WYDOT.

Feasibility: This would require securing easements across two separate properties: the commercial property owned by Pete Karns (Staples) and the common ground owned by West Hansen Townhomes HOA. Both property owners have indicated a willingness to grant an easement. TOJ City Councilman Jim Stanford has indicated that he would approve of TOJ holding these easements. We would likely need get preliminary approval and siting recommendations from the private landowners and an engineer, then have the stormwater pipe location surveyed, draft/sign the easements, and record them. At that point the stormwater pipe could be built to connect into the ponds.

Approaches: We have already approached JHLT, West Hansen Townhomes HOA, and Pete Karns about the project. All have expressed a willingness to proceed. The first step to continue this would be to work with TOJ Engineering, WYDOT, and Teton Conservation District to pursue funding and permission for installing the ditch.

Projected Costs: It appears that easements to run the water across the Karns and West Hansen properties could be acquired at cost (survey/legal costs of filling the easements). Construction costs would appear to be minimal and maintenance would simply require keeping the ditch clear.

Funding Sources: Potential in-kind contributions from TOJ to construct the ditch. TCD cost share and WYDEQ section 319 funding both appear to be likely sources as well.

Key Questions: What are the exact costs of installing the new ditch? What are the projected cost savings and water quality benefits from treatment in the rodeo grounds ponds?

Project Properties: Pete Karns, West Hansen Townhomes HOA, Karns Meadow

Complimentary Projects: Stormwater Master Plan, Stormwater Utility, Powderhorn Stormwater

Project Snapshot: Close in Dumpsters Along Flat Creek

Project Goal: Improve overall aesthetic and water quality and reduce trash pollution along Flat Creek by working with private landowners to close in streamside dumpsters.

Project Description: This project will launch a community initiative to close in dumpsters to prevent leaking trash into the creek and to improve the visual quality of the creek. The project will entail soliciting a design from local firms that can be built cost effectively along the creek. Local businesses will then be notified that they can apply for cost share to build the enclosures for dumpsters next to the creek. A potential addition to this project involves working with local artists and students to decorate the enclosures with creek themed art. The project could also include identifying better locations for dumpsters and enclosure locations on individual properties to set them back from creek frontage.

SRF Role: Secure funding and coordinate this program among local businesses.

Community Partners: Town of Jackson, Jackson Hole Public Art, Center of Wonder, Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Chamber of Commerce, Teton Association of Realtors, individual property owners, trash collection companies

Project Background: Flat Creek has become a common place for businesses to store dumpsters along the creek. These dumpsters leak trash into the waterway and generally harm the aesthetic and contribute to trash pollution along the creek for users.

Impact: This will improve the overall community interaction with the creek by providing a more aesthetically appealing setting. Additionally, it will reduce the load of trash that ends up in the creek.

Feasibility: This project is highly feasible, though dependent on funding and staff time to coordinate the program.

Approaches: Secure a small amount of funding to come up with an appropriate design and cost estimate for dumpster enclosures along the creek that work with trash collection service needs, storage needs, space constraints. Secure additional funding to launch a cost share program with local businesses to construct the enclosures.

Other communities have worked with local art classes and artists to decorate or paint these enclosures with creek themed art. This approach could be replicated in Jackson as a public art project, community engagement tool, and educational outreach component.

Projected Costs: Materials for these enclosures are generally fairly moderate in cost, running on average from \$150-1,500 depending on size, design, and materials used. The majority of the creek corridor through town could be addressed for \$10,000 in materials or less (assumes donated labor).

Funding Sources: Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, Center of Wonder

Key Questions: How many businesses will participate in a cost share program versus having the full cost of the program covered?

Project Properties: Karl M. Johnson Foundation, Town Creek Townhomes, Asbell properties, Dick and Linda Martin Properties, First Republic Bank, Homestead Limited Partnership (Pete Karns), RLM Jackson LLC, Creekside Commercial LLC

Complimentary Projects: Flat Creek Forum

Project Snapshot: Re-Develop El Tequila Building

Project Goal: Redevelop the El Tequila building as a model property for how redevelopment can embrace and enhance Flat Creek.

Project Description: Work with existing landowner on re-development plans. Orient the building to embrace the creek, complete stream restoration in conjunction with the re-development to improve natural filtration along the creek bank, reduce snow runoff into the creek.

SRF Role: Sit down with the property owners through a series of meetings to educate them about important creek elements to take into consideration with regards to the creek. This will mostly be an educational role rather than an active/funding participant role.

Community Partners: Teton Conservation District, WY Department of Environmental Quality, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Trout Unlimited

Project Background: This property was purchased by First Republic Bank in 2017. The bank plans to redevelop the property into a new location for their bank. Through preliminary conversations with intermediaries, the owners are willing to entertain re-development plans that change how the community interacts with the creek. The First Republic Bank president owns a property along Flat Creek further down stream and is apparently involved in restoration efforts on his property.

Impact: This property could be a model re-development for other landowners. It is a relatively high profile property that will attract the public's attention and help surrounding landowners see the potential to redevelop properties that embrace the creek.

Feasibility: There is a strong likelihood that this project takes place, though it will depend on timing with the landowner and the willingness of the developer to involve creek-centric concepts into the plans.

Approaches: Engage in direct conversation with the landowner to inject concepts about the creek at an early junction.

Projected Costs: This could be an extremely cost effective approach. The cost of installing site improvements will depend on what, exactly the property owner is interested in pursuing.

Funding Sources: There is a strong possibility of finding DEQ funding for stream restoration. TCD worked with Rustic Inn to secure restoration dollars via DEQ for a similar project. In this case they would most likely use same sources.

Key Questions: What sorts of projects are the property owners willing to engage in?

Project Properties: El Tequila Building

Complimentary Projects: Impact investment, Dumpster Enclosure, Riparian Buffer

Project Snapshot: Flat Creek Community Forum

Project Goal: Host a community-wide forum to engage local residents about the current status of Flat Creek. Utilize the event to develop community support for the various projects, regulations, and uses of the creek that can improve how Jackson interacts with the creek.

Project Description: This project will coordinate a community wide meeting about Flat Creek. It will involve presentations by experts about the current status of Flat Creek, including scientific descriptions about water and habitat quality through the creek. It will identify current challenges that Flat Creek faces and what actions, if any, are underway to address those threats. The forum will also focus on proposed changes to Flat Creek and will gather public input about how and when to advance those. The forum will involve presentations and panel discussions with an opportunity for the public to ask questions and guide the discussion.

The meeting will raise awareness for the public about Flat Creek in order to generate the public interest that has been lacking. While Flat Creek is widely considered an amenity for the Town of Jackson, very few residents are aware of the creek's impaired water quality, the public access points available to the creek, nor the significant body of work that has been undertaken by organizations to improve the creek in recent years. This forum will be designed to engage the public about the creek and to solicit input about proposed actions to improve it.

SRF Role: SRF is well positioned to organize and sponsor this forum. SRF will coordinate various speakers from WYGFD, TCD, TOJ, TU, and private property owners who can lead the discussion. SRF will also carry out the marketing of the event.

Community Partners: WYGFD, TCD, TOJ, TU, and private property owners

Project Background: While Flat Creek is widely considered a community priority, community needs such as housing and transportation typically dominate the public discussion and preclude meaningful public action on the creek. While agencies like Wyoming Game and Fish have carried out meaningful projects along the creek in recent years, that work is rarely brought to the public's attention. Town of Jackson officials have consistently expressed that any actions they take to address Flat Creek are well received by the community, but that it is often difficult to get those issues on the agenda because of a lack of public focus.

Impact: The impacts of this project are wide-ranging and difficult to predict, but in the short-term it will make advancing stormwater management and the Flat Creek overlay through the Town of Jackson much easier. We believe it will also serve as a foundation for developing a comprehensive community vision for Flat Creek moving forward.

Feasibility: Highly feasible. Some logistical considerations will need to be made about timing, but the partner organizations identified here are all likely/eager to participate.

Projected Costs: This forum can be carried out for less than \$10,000. The majority of those funds would need to be dedicated to reserving a space, staff time to coordinate the event, and a marketing budget to attract the public. If a public or donated space is utilized, the costs will be less than projected. Each of the speakers would be willing to donate time to participate.

Funding Sources: Community Foundation of Jackson Hole and Teton Conservation District are likely funding partners.

Key Questions: How can this event be most effectively marketed to generate public interest? What timing is best?

Project Properties: N/A

Complimentary Projects: Flat Creek Overlay, Stormwater Master Plan

Project Snapshot: Flat Creek Overlay

Project Goal: Get TOJ to adopt the already completed draft overlay for Flat Creek. The overlay provides incentives for re-development along Flat Creek that result in better stream quality and public access.

Project Description: A draft overlay is already drafted and being considered as an update to LDRs. This project requires ongoing public attention on the issue and will need to bring public support for the concept to bear on elected officials. Getting some version of this overlap adopted is critical to changing how private landowners interact with the creek.

SRF Role: The project already has its own momentum through the update to the LDRs, however it needs constant attention to keep public officials' attention on it and to shepherd it through the process. SRF would play that role, ensuring that it is discussed at the appropriate meetings and sitting down to discuss the objectives with elected officials.

Community Partners: Town of Jackson

Project Background: Many of the developments that exist along Flat Creek were constructed in the 1970s or earlier. A number of updates to building requirements have take place since then, meaning that most of these constructions are non-conforming. As such, redeveloping these properties is often seen as infeasible due to the costs that would be incurred. The draft overlay is meant to introduce incentives to the process that would encourage property owners to consider re-development that resulted in better stream function and public access along the creek.

Impact: The scale of this impact would be enormous for Flat Creek through town. While they might not be felt immediately, this is a critical policy framework to change how development takes place along Flat Creek in the decades to come. Adopting an overlay will relieve some of the reluctance of private landowners to engage in solutions. The need for this is real, as many older developments have pavement pushed right to the stream bank or have dumpsters stored against the creek.

Feasibility: Highly feasible, though it will require public pressure on elected officials.

Approaches: We have already approached Councilman Stanford about the overlay and he is willing to support it although he acknowledges it will be difficult to keep it as a top priority. Will need to engage other elected officials to have them support it as well. More critical to the process is tracking the overlay through the adoption process. The Natural Resources advisory council will most likely consider the overlay before moving to the Town Council. Making sure that the advisory council is fully educated on the overlay will be critical to moving it forward.

Projected Costs: Staff time to engage elected officials. Depending on how this process plays out, it could require significant time to give input and to inform elected officials. Alternatively, it could move through the planning process relatively quickly.

Funding Sources: N/A

Key Questions: How can we raise this project in priority for the Town of Jackson? What incentives within the overlay are enough to encourage redevelopment and how will the community react to the incentives provided?

Project Properties: N/A

Complimentary Projects: Impact investment, Riparian Buffer

Project Snapshot: Impact Investments along Flat Creek

Project Goal: Purchase a suitable property that could be used as a model for redevelopment along Flat Creek and could serve multiple environmental and community goals associated with the creek.

Project Description: Work to secure ownership of a property with an impact investor and redevelop it to accomplish Flat Creek goals. The redevelopment would utilize various sources of public and grant funding for stream and bank restoration, construction of green infrastructure like riparian buffer, and public access points. The investment would be recouped through the eventual resale of the property with value creation achieved through stream and site improvements.

SRF Role: Provide insight into stream appropriate redevelopment actions and support efforts to attract public and grant funding to the property.

Community Partners: Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Teton Conservation District

Project Background: Commercial developers along Flat Creek have generally ignored the creek as an amenity to create property value (the Rustic Inn is an exception). Commercial properties along Flat Creek are valued below market cost because of mandatory setbacks associated with the creek. Commercial property in the downtown corridor is generally valued at \$134 per square foot with improvements. While comparable sales data is sparse, the most recent sale along Flat Creek (El Tequila building) was only valued at \$89 per square foot. This creates an opportunity to create value by developing the property in a way that embraces the creek and creates a unique creek front property.

Should the Town of Jackson adopt the proposed Flat Creek Overlay, redevelopment potential may be increased via incentives granted in exchange for setbacks and public access. Properties that are acquired before adoption of such an overlay would see a resulting value increase.

Rustic Inn created a template for pursuing this opportunity when they purchased a creek front property and created an amenity for guests. Rustic Inn was able to access significant public funding through Wyoming Game and Fish Department and Teton Conservation District to carry out stream improvements that are accessible by guests. While the Jackson Hole community generally is not able to access this amenity, impact investments could replicate these efforts to create highly visible projects that increase property values.

Impact: The impacts would be determined by approaches that property owners pursue. We would certainly expect any effort to improve creekside habitat and water quality. Other approaches could address other community goals such as affordable housing.

Feasibility: The limited availability of creekside properties make the feasibility of this approach questionable at this time, though it would certainly be feasible in the future. Pursuing this approach will require constant monitoring of real estate market. Impact investors exist within Jackson who have been approached about the possibility of pursuing these opportunities. Any impact investment opportunity will be unique and individual investors will need to be contacted when opportunities arise.

Approaches: Keeping apprised of opportunities is going to be critical to any approach. Contacting realtors to let them know about interest in any creek front properties will be a critical first step. We

have developed a template pro forma that can be utilized to assess any investment opportunity and which can be brought to impact investors as an educational/assessment tool.

Making contact with Wyoming Game and Fish and Teton Conservation District about grant opportunities is also key. Both organizations have a positive view of the restoration efforts associated with the Rustic Inn and would be easy to engage on this approach.

There is also an opportunity to use this approach to address other community goals such as affordable housing. That approach would be dependent on the developer.

Projected Costs: Costs will be largely dependent on acquisition and construction costs. Commercial property is typically selling for \$134 per square foot close to the downtown core of Jackson. At the south end of town, closer to Smith's Plaza, those numbers are significantly lower, with comparable sales as low as \$26 per square foot, but typically closer to \$66 per square foot.

Funding Sources: Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Teton Conservation District. If affordable housing options are pursued, additional grant sources are available.

Key Questions: Which creek front commercial properties will become available for sale? Is it possible to pursue this option at the south end of town or are those commercial properties too far removed from locals?

Project Properties: Dependent on market

Complimentary Projects: Flat Creek Overlay

Property Assumptions

Square Footage

Purchase Price per Square Foot

Purchase Price

INVESTMENT PROFIT & LOSS

Year 0

Year 1

Year 2

Revenue

Sale of Land

Conservation & Enhancement

Rental Income

Total Revenues

Expenses

Acquisition Expenses

Operating Expenses

Property Taxes

Restoration

Property Sale Expenses

Total Expenses

Cash Income

Net Income/Loss

Revenues

Property Sale Breakdown

Parcel Sold

Price Per Acre

Sub Total

Conservation/Enhancement Breakdown

Restoration Grants

Sub Totals

Rental Revenue

Lease \$ Per Square Foot

Square Foot Lease

Sub Total

Expenses

Acquisition Expenses Breakdown

Square Feet Purchased

Price per Square Foot

Legal Expenses

Appraisal

Staff Time

SubTotal

Operating Expenses Breakdown

Property Management

Lease Oversight

Stewardship Expenses

Managemnet Subtotal

Property Taxes

Legal Fees

Sub Total

Restoration Expenses Breakdown

Stream Contractor Work

Materials

Labor

Upland Subtotal

Riparian Contractor Work

Materials

Labor

Riparian Subtotal

Restoration Subtotal

Property Sale Expenses

Appraisal

Legal Expenses

Broker Commission

Negotitations Staff Time

Property Sale Subtotal

ROI (Does not include time value)

Project Snapshot: Build Public Support for Karns Meadow Park

Project Goal: Launch a public outreach effort around Karns Meadow park to generate support for a public park and pathway along Flat Creek that will raise public awareness and use of the creek.

Project Description: Work to raise grassroots awareness about the potential to develop the park and build support within the community prior to advancing it. With a high degree of public support, move the project through the TOJ, and get the pathway constructed. This project would involve creating public awareness through events, advertisements, social media, and other methods.

SRF Role: Depending on willingness to engage, SRF could take the public lead on this.

Community Partners: Jackson Hole Land Trust (holds a conservation easement on Karns Meadow property), Town of Jackson, Teton County (Brian Schilling)

Project Background: The Karns Meadow property was sold to TOJ under the assumption that it would be turned into a public park that includes trails and/or a pathway. Since that time, TOJ has expressed reluctance to allow public access into the park during the winter. This, along with public concerns about the impacts of human presence in Karns Meadow on mule deer populations, has stymied efforts to build trails/a pathway through the park. Original plans conceived a bike/walking path and a cross country track that looped through the entire park.

JHLT is supportive of a park and wants to support the original concept but is leery of the public backlash that could emerge around winter range concerns. JHLT would back a campaign to help get the project through, but cannot be the public lead on such an effort.

Impact: Would bring significant public awareness to the creek and promote more community interaction with the creek.

Feasibility: Public perception of this project is a challenge and the issue could be polarizing in the community. There would certainly be backlash around any such effort, though there is also likely to be significant support. Backlash from Conservation Alliance, neighbors, and other community groups would be likely.

Approaches: There is a discussion that needs to take place about what the park would actually entail. To date there is no consensus about whether to allow full access some sort of limited closure, either seasonal or at night for the park. Undertaking this project would likely depend on engaging groups such as the Conservation Alliance at the outset to see what might be feasible. If use conditions can be agreed upon in private rather than in public, this project becomes significantly more feasible.

Projected Costs: This will depend on the extent of the project that SRF chose to take on, but would likely require a minimum ~\$5,000 media campaign as well as staff time dedicated to pulling together informational meetings for the community.

Funding Sources: JHLT could play a role as a funding partner for this campaign. They have expressed a willingness to play such a role.

Key Questions: What is WYGFD's take on the project? How do they feel about the quality of winter range in the meadow? What about summer impacts? What sorts of wildlife closures (seasonal/nightly) are appropriate?

Project Properties: Karns Meadow

Complimentary Projects: Flat Creek Forum

Project Snapshot: Improve Stormwater Treatment from Powderhorn Lane

Project Goal: Install green and/or grey infrastructure treatment mechanisms for stormwater flowing off of Powderhorn Lane and into Flat Creek.

Project Description: The stormwater pipe that empties into Flat Creek at Russ Garaman Park has no treatment mechanisms in place. As a result the drain, which carries stormwater from a large area, dumps untreated water directly into Flat Creek. This project would work with Town of Jackson and Teton Conservation District to identify site appropriate treatment mechanisms.

SRF Role: Advocate on behalf of the improvements with TOJ, help apply for funding via WYDEQ/Teton Conservation District.

Community Partners: Town of Jackson Engineering, Teton Conservation District, WY Department of Environmental Quality

Project Background: When it was initially installed, the stormwater pipe that runs down Powderhorn Lane had no treatment mechanisms installed. The Town of Jackson is aware of the untreated water flowing into the creek but currently has no plans to install a treatment unit.

The Town of Jackson also owns the property where the stormwater empties into the creek and it is managed as part of Russ Garaman Park. The property has a bike path on it with green space on either side. This section of the park is very lightly used with most visitors concentrating use on the bike path. Given this ownership, there is an opportunity to work to install a managed wetland that could serve filtration needs and be a showcase project for green infrastructure in the Town of Jackson.

Impact: Improve sediment and pollutant load into Flat Creek with the overall goal of getting Flat Creek's status as an impaired waterway changed.

Threat: Pursuing a green infrastructure project would require changing the use of part of the park, which could be seen as controversial. Installing a mechanical treatment unit on the outflow is likely uncontroversial.

Feasibility: This would require working with the Town of Jackson to redesign and implement this project. It will require some leadership within the town staff or among elected officials because of the impacts to the park.

Approaches: Stormwater treatment could either be carried out through a mechanical treatment of sediment or through a green infrastructure approach.

Projected Costs: Mechanical treatment units typically cost \$40,000-50,000, installed and then require an annual maintenance. A constructed wetland approach would be cost out based on design, but would likely be cost competitive with the mechanical unit. The wetland would require only minimal maintenance.

Funding Sources: Potential in-kind contributions from TOJ to construct the wetland or install the mechanical unit. WYDEQ funding and TCD would be likely sources for green infrastructure options.

Given the likelihood of funding for green infrastructure, it would almost certainly be cheaper to build and maintain the green infrastructure approach.

Key Questions: What are the exact costs of designing and installing the wetland? Is the Town of Jackson amenable to a green infrastructure approach?

Project Properties: 355 Crabtree Ln.

Complimentary Projects: Stormwater Master Plan, Stormwater Utility, Connect Stormwater

Project Snapshot: Plan Full Re-Engineering of Flat Creek

Project Goal: Work with an environmental engineering firm to plan out a full re-engineering of Flat Creek that would set the long term vision to create a three step floodplain system through the town of Jackson, resulting in improved flood control, water quality, and riparian habitat. This plan will be the catalyst for developing a shared, community vision for what Flat Creek will look like moving forward and will raise awareness of the status and potential of Flat Creek.

Project Description: As it flows through Jackson, Flat Creek has been channelized and restricted down to a narrow channel for large sections. This has limited the flood plain and restricted available riparian habitat. This project would address those changes by creating a plan for a full re-engineering of the creek as it passes through town. To be clear, this project would simply involve developing the plan. We would expect that the full execution of the plan would be a long-term project executed over a ~20 year time horizon.

Urban stream restoration has increasingly moved towards developing stepped down channels that can accommodate different flood stages and provide riparian habitat and better recreational access. Design typically focuses on a step down approach that accommodates a stream channel, bank full, and flood stages. This project would follow the lead of those other projects by designing that creek functionality through Jackson.

In a broader sense, this project will help all of the community partners who are engaged on Flat Creek start to develop a shared vision for what Flat Creek will look like through the Town of Jackson in the years to come. Much of the work that is currently carried out on the creek is done in a piecemeal fashion and with limited coordination. This plan will produce a long-term vision of what the community wants the creek to look like and how it wants to interact with the creek. We envision significant input from WYGFD, TCD, Town of Jackson, Trout Unlimited, individual property owners, and other partners.

SRF Role: Take the lead on coordinating the effort, engaging elected officials, and applying for funding for plans.

Community Partners: Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Teton Conservation District, Town of Jackson, Trout Unlimited.

Project Background: Throughout the past 70 years, significant alterations have been made to the Flat Creek channel through the Town of Jackson in order to accommodate new development. As a result, the creek has lost much of its sinuosity and significant portions of riparian habitat. Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality classifies Flat Creek as an impaired waterway due to water quality issues (related to sediment) and a lack of riparian habitat.

Recognizing that addressing the streamside habitat is a large-scale project, this project proposes an engineered solution through Jackson. The project would develop a plan for re-engineering the stream through the town. This plan would be a blueprint to guide the re-engineering of the stream.

Impact: If enacted, this project would be a significant step towards delisting Flat Creek as an impaired waterway. Addressing habitat concerns along the creek is a difficult step that requires significant participation from multiple landowners. This plan would set the vision to engage these landowners in a

coordinated effort over time and to lay out the vision for how Flat Creek functions as it flows through Jackson.

Feasibility: The feasibility of the project is largely dependent on funding. Wyoming Game and Fish Department has already engaged an engineering firm (Water Vation/Lucas Babbit) to do work on the Lockhart Ranch this fall who could do a quick assessment of the project to indicate feasibility from an engineering point of view.

Approaches: Engage with WYGFD's engineer during the Lockhart project to get a sense of feasibility. At that point, work with WYGFD to apply for funding for the planning. Coordinate efforts with Town of Jackson to get elected officials to formally adopt the restoration plan and then work with landowners and organizations to carry out the restoration plan over the long-term.

Projected Costs: Costs for the plan are likely to run between \$100,000-200,000. Carrying out the actual restoration is likely to be significantly more expensive.

Funding Sources: Numerous grant sources exist for this type of work. Laura Jane Musser Fund provides planning funding as does WYGFD. Teton Conservation District is another likely source of funding through the cost share program.

Key Questions: What extent of the stream would be included in the plan? The full extent through Jackson or with a focus on specific sections of the creek (Dairy Queen to Karns Meadow, Karns to Smiths)?

Project Properties: TBD

Complimentary Projects: Flat Creek Forum, Riparian Buffer

Project Snapshot: Construct Riparian Buffer Strip along Flat Creek Banks

Project Goal: Enhance riparian habitat and water quality in Flat Creek through Jackson by constructing a ~5' wide buffer of riparian vegetation along the extent of the creek.

Project Description: Create an incentive program to help landowners plant and maintain riparian vegetation along Flat Creek. This program would be created by SRF/TOJ/TCD and would encourage landowners to plant willows, reeds, and other riparian vegetation along the banks of Flat Creek. Agreements would be entered in with landowners that would require them to leave any vegetation planted through the program to be left in place for a set amount of time (~15-20 years).

SRF Role: SRF could potentially run this program internally, or it could follow the model of Fish Friendly Lawns and work as a partner to provide education and encouragement for landowners to participate.

Community Partners: TOJ, Teton Conservation District

Project Background: Flat Creek's status as an impaired waterway is due, in part, to a lack of riparian habitat and vegetation. Through construction and alterations to the stream corridor, habitat has been lost throughout the corridor. With on-going development pressure expected to continue, it will be necessary to develop programs that can help landowners increase the available habitat through incentive programs.

Impact: Re-establishing a riparian buffer along the creek would help to re-establish extensive habitat for the benefit of wildlife. This buffer would also serve as a natural filtration mechanism along the creek, improving water quality.

Feasibility: This program will require buy in at a state level in order to make funding available for it. While 319 funding from DEQ could be accessed, it will be necessary to work with the agency to encourage their participation in this program.

Approaches: The most realistic approach is to launch a pilot program and to work with landowners who are currently considering development or re-development to help them cover the costs of installing riparian vegetation buffers. Developing landscape sketches of what different vegetative covers might look like can help convince landowners to participate. Once the pilot program is fully expended, funds could be expanded into a broader program.

Projected Costs: Depends on the cost of installing riparian vegetation and the choice of plant. Willows are inexpensive to buy and plant and would be a likely choice.

Funding Sources: WY DEQ 319 sourced funding is the most likely funding mechanism. It is unlikely that the program can be implemented without DEQ, or a significant private source, playing the role of getting the program off the ground.

Key Questions: How much funding is necessary to launch a pilot program? What should the scope and scale of such a program be? Which property owners in town should participate in a pilot?

Project Properties: Properties slated for development/re-development within Jackson; Karns Meadow; targeted property owners through town looking to upgrade/improve landscaping/vegetation

Complimentary Projects: Flat Creek Forum, El Tequila, Impact Investment

Project Snapshot: Work with TOJ to Develop New Stormwater Master Plan

Project Goal: Create a new TOJ stormwater master plan that leads to better treatment and reduction of stormwater loads to benefit both quantity and quality of stormwater inputs into Flat Creek.

Project Description: Help TOJ work with TCD to devise a new stormwater master plan for the downtown core area that can provide tools to improve stormwater management throughout the Town of Jackson. As part of this effort, we will bring consultants with expertise in stormwater master planning to inform local town staff, elected officials, and engineers about best practices.

The goal is to have the town adopt a master plan that incorporates options to reduce the load of stormwater entering into the grey infrastructure system and improves the quality of stormwater that enters Flat Creek.

Work with other Rocky Mountain communities to draw from existing SWMPs and pull examples. Work with TOJ to utilize the existing SPET funds to develop a plan that sets the stage for the construction of the new pipe but also creates the toolkit necessary to improve stormwater throughout TOJ

SRF Role: Help guide TOJ and TCD in understanding what is possible and make next steps easy to accomplish. This can be done by organizing visits from stormwater specialists, researching successful RFP language, and guiding TOJ through the process.

Community Partners: Town of Jackson, Teton Conservation District

Project Background: In 2014, local voters approved a SPET measure for \$250,000 to fund the creation of a new stormwater master plan for the downtown area in Jackson. Since that time, very little time and money has been spent on developing that plan.

Impact: The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality lists Flat Creek as an impaired waterway due to noncompliance with sediment loads and riparian habitat loss. The biggest source of sediment load into the creek is stormwater runoff. Developing a new stormwater master plan that addresses water quality issues in the creek would be a tremendous step in the direction of improving water quality in the creek.

Feasibility: Highly feasible. SRF has already submitted a cost share application to TCD to bring a stormwater specialist to Jackson to present on master planning. TOJ has indicated a willingness to take this approach, and TCD sees it as a priority for them.

Approaches: Continue to work with TOJ and TCD to advance this and bring a specialist to Jackson to help draft a master plan that addresses the waterway's needs.

Projected Costs: \$4,000 cost for bringing a stormwater specialist to present. Additional staff time will be required to coordinate development of an RFP.

Funding Sources: Existing SPET funds exist at TOJ level to launch the masterplan as long as it focuses on downtown core. TCD has funding that can be brought to bear through the costshare program to take on technical costs.

Key Questions: What are the best approaches/tools that can be used for stormwater management and mitigation? What are the policy approaches needed to achieve our outcomes? What is the best process to develop the RFP?

Project Properties: N/A

Complimentary Projects: Stormwater Utility, Powderhorn Stormwater, Connect Stormwater

Project Snapshot: Create a Stormwater Utility

Project Goal: Launch an initiative to get elected officials to approve a formal evaluation, and eventual creation, of a stormwater utility for the Town of Jackson.

Project Description: Work with Town of Jackson staff and elected officials to evaluate and design the policy framework for a stormwater utility. The Town of Jackson will need to rely on a consultant to design the specific policy and address critical questions about how the utility is enacted (e.g. are rates determined by amount of impermeable surface on a lot or is there a standard rate paid). This evaluation would also produce a formal evaluation of advancing a stormwater utility. Once the utility is defined the partners would publically advocate for the adoption of the utility because of its potential to provide sustained funding for improving flood control and water quality.

SRF Role: SRF and partners would participate by pushing for adoption of the utility through a public campaign and direct outreach to elected officials.

Community Partners: JH Trout Unlimited, Town of Jackson, Teton Conservation District

Project Background: Inconsistent funding hampers stormwater management by the Town of Jackson. Stormwater management is part of an overall maintenance budget for Jackson and can be affected by other emergencies that lead to funding shortfalls. As the amount of impermeable surface continues to grow in Jackson, stormwater management is becoming a larger problem, yet the amount of funding available to deal with the problem is not growing commensurately.

The typical solution that municipalities exercise when they have grown beyond their capacity to deal with stormwater is to create a utility, a mill levy that creates a steady funding source for management. Creating a utility will create a reliable stream for stormwater treatment for the Town of Jackson and will ensure that a dedicated funding stream exists for stormwater and will open up the door for significant changes and improvements in stormwater.

In partnership with TCD, SRF is already working to bring a stormwater specialist to Jackson who can provide some insights about the feasibility of creating a stormwater utility.

Impact: This would have a significant impact on water quality in Flat Creek, particularly if pursued in conjunction with a stormwater master plan. Given that stormwater is the greatest contributor of sediment loading in Flat Creek, which is listed as an impaired waterway due to excessive sediment, creating a stable source of funding that can manage water quality into the creek.

Feasibility: Highly feasible, but should be evaluated as part of a broader look at stormwater management. Numerous documents exist from the EPA and other organizations about how to best create a stormwater utility. Each of these points to the need to generate public support and buy in to successfully implement the model. Other communities have seen push back for a “rain tax,” but this is an approach that is increasingly common across the country. Town of Jackson officials indicate that it is an approach that has been discussed.

Approaches: A critical piece of this will be getting elected officials on board to champion this through the process. Since the adoption of the utility requires people to voluntarily pay fees, it will require a public recognition of the benefits of enacting the utility.

Projected Costs: The Town of Jackson will need to hire a consultant to evaluate and design a potential utility.

Funding Sources: Town of Jackson would be relied on to fund the analysis of the utility.

Key Questions: Which elected officials can take the lead on pushing this through?

Complimentary Projects: Stormwater Master Plan