

Valley Advocates for Responsible Development



Jim Fitzgerald captured this moose photo along the Teton Creek corridor in the city of Driggs.

2013: Building Lasting Economic Prosperity

Idaho Fish and Game's fun and successful "Take Me Fishing" program gets Idaho's kids out for affordable fishing adventures. Rangers provide equipment, instruction and free one-day permits for families at hundreds of scheduled locations around the state, including Victor's Trail Creek Pond. Getting kids outside builds enthusiasm for a lifetime of outdoor adventure. It also prepares them to participate and contribute to one of Idaho's largest economic drivers. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation supports more than 77,000 Idaho jobs, totaling \$1.8 billion in wages. Consumer spending on hunting, fishing and recreation in Idaho tops \$6 billion annually.

Look around you – this breathtaking valley is uniquely positioned to benefit from investment in outdoor recreation. We are bordered by spectacular public lands that offer hiking, biking, riding, wildlife viewing and hunting. The Teton River is a world-class fishery with accessible family floats and gripping whitewater.

Harnessing the economic and community benefits of our stunning natural amenities does not simply happen. It takes foresight, planning and a commitment to lasting stewardship. Land-use planning is the vital step to building our economy. Public lands access must be preserved. Wildlife habitat and streams need to be protected. Development must be thoughtfully designed to avoid diminishing the attributes that create our reputation as a great place to live, visit and invest.

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Historically, Teton Valley has struggled to position itself as a livable, high-amenity community. Our casual approach to planning created a boom/bust economy, and the most recent collapse left behind 8,000 + vacant residential lots – many of them in critical habitat areas. Without clear and intentional leadership, Teton Valley risks losing the priceless amenities that sustain our economy and way of life.

Fortunately, the collective community recognized that we can do better. In the past year, VARD has been hard at work with diverse collaborators across Teton Valley as we strive to build the foundation for resource stewardship and lasting economic prosperity. In 2013, we successfully advocated for protection of wetlands surrounding the community of Teton,

hosted a sold-out Sustainable Homes Tour, and published our third book with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Additionally, we kicked off our Tetons to the Teton campaign with a strategic, valley-wide assessment of critical and strategic conservation opportunities. VARD has moved forward into 2014 with enthusiasm heightened by new partnerships and refined strategies. We greatly appreciate your support and look forward to another great year!



Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

MISSION: To advocate for the private, public and civic actions that will result in the responsible development and sustainable use of natural resources (water, land, wildlife and air) in Teton Valley.

OFFICE HOURS—
M-TR 9:00am-4:00pm
Friday by appointment

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MAILING ADDRESS—
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www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org

www.facebook.com/Valley.Advocates.for.Responsible.Development

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In 2003 (*above left*), Driggs was a tiny rural town with no rules or guidelines for downtown construction. With the help of VARD and the Downtown Driggs Community Association, the city adopted design standards, providing clear guidance to ensure quality building aesthetics that protect the town's historical character and charm. Now, flash forward one decade (*above right*). Many of the grand old buildings have been restored with high-quality fixtures, and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes beckon people to stroll and shop. Historical Driggs has been brought back to life!

VARD in 2013: Highlights & Accomplishments

VARD as a community resource:

- ✦ Advocated for fair and transparent government on land-use planning by attending Teton County and City of Driggs, Teton, and Victor city meetings and hearings. Reported findings to our 500+ supporters via email and website updates.
- ✦ Published two VARD newsletters about responsible land-use planning and smart growth in Teton Valley. The first newsletter focused on why planning matters, listing examples of Teton Valley planning decisions that have benefited and harmed our local community. The second newsletter explored the economic value of wildlife and how the draft code written by planning contractor Steven Loosli meshed with our community's new Comprehensive Plan. The newsletters were delivered to our members and over 4,600 addresses within Teton County, Idaho.
- ✦ VARD Program Director and Staff Attorney Anna Trentadue and VARD Board President David Axelrod represented the voters of Teton pro bono as they sought the recognition of the referendum election that de-annexed 267 acres of wetlands and agricultural land in the ecologically important Spring Creek corridor. After four years of litigation, the appeal went to the Idaho Supreme Court and back down to District Court where it was successfully resolved via a settlement agreement, declaring the 267 acres "de-annexed" from the city limits as originally desired by Teton's voters (the settlement negotiations occurred during the fall of 2013 and were finalized in January 2014).
- ✦ Thanks to grants from Protect Our Winters and the Community Foundation of Teton Valley, VARD hosted a sold-out Teton Valley sustainable homes tour and educational seminar about sustainable design and development. VARD introduced participants to the wide variety of "green" building and construction

2013 ACCOMPLISHMENTS cont. on page 4 →

2013 Financial Review

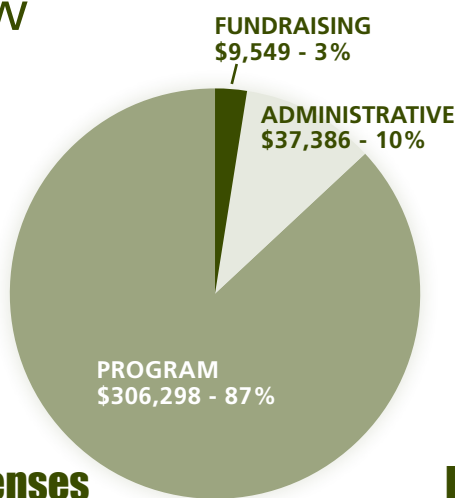
REVENUE

Donations	\$115,059
Fundraising Events	\$20,456
Special Projects	\$8,085
Tetons to the Teton* Grant...	\$200,000
Other Grants.....	\$74,800
TOTAL.....	\$418,400

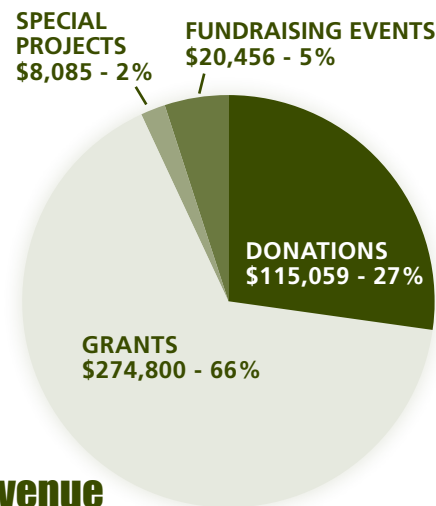
EXPENSES

General Program	\$125,676
Tetons to the Teton*	\$180,622
Fundraising.....	\$9,549
Administrative	\$37,386
TOTAL.....	\$353,233

Expenses



Revenue



*Tetons to the Teton Strategic Mapping: VARD worked collaboratively with local and national conservation groups to identify opportunities for strategic conservation in Teton Valley. Stay tuned for exciting projects and partnerships developed under this plan!

MANY THANKS

to our supporters from January 1
through December 31, 2013

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Arrested Developments

Combating Zombie Subdivisions and
Other Excess Entitlements



Policy Focus Report • Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

With the help of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Sonoran Institute, VARD staff published a policy focus report entitled, "Arrested Developments."

Roland & Jonnie Schuler
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We apologize if we have missed anyone. If we missed you, please let us know so we can thank you properly.



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— 2013 ACCOMPLISHMENTS cont. from page 2

models located in Teton Valley and partnered with local architects and developers to discuss techniques used to make buildings more environmentally responsible and resource efficient throughout the building's life cycle.

VARD as a resource for local government:

- * VARD provided public comments to Teton County's Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners, as well as extensive coverage to VARD membership about Teton County's plans to re-write the county's code following the adoption of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan. Rather than take advantage of the \$1.5M Sustainable Communities grant from HUD that included free professional code writing services from Code Studio (a firm with 25+ years of experience from Austin, TX), the Board of County Commissioners voted to hire out-of-county "special planning projects" contractor Steven Loosli to draft the county's code. VARD advocated for transparency and accountability to Teton County taxpayers, but Loosli's submitted draft code was largely cut-and-paste copied from Shelby, TN; Fremont County, ID; and pre-existing Teton County code, brochures and reference guides. In light of these expenditures, VARD submitted 200+ page complaint and a request for review by the Idaho Attorney General.
- * Provided comment letters to Teton County and to the Cities of Victor, Driggs, and Teton on a variety of land-use matters such as, but not limited to, the redesign of the Victor intersection, the re-zoning of the Burns Concrete batch plant tower in Driggs, the re-platting of River Rim Ranch, the Willows, and Canyon Creek (8,100+ acres).
- * VARD staff served on the Teton County Impact Fee Advisory Committee and the Teton County Economic Development Steering Committee.
- * VARD helped spread the word and encouraged public participation in the re-writing of Driggs' and Victor's development code. Working with the Code Studio code writers (a team of urban designers, architects, and economists), Victor and Driggs held public workshops to provide input into the writing of the new zoning and development codes for the cities. Although Teton County is the pilot project for the Sustainable Communities HUD grant, the county instead opted to hire contract planner Steven Loosli using county funds to write the county's code, instead of using the grant funds.

VARD Reshaping Development Patterns:

- * VARD continued to advocate for plat vacations of subdivision plats using Teton County's new re-platting ordinance, which offers incentives for the redesign of obsolete or defunct subdivisions to reduce

fiscal and environmental impacts within Teton County. In 2013, VARD provided specific public comment during the re-platting process for the largest footprint subdivisions in Teton County: River Rim Ranch and Canyon Creek Ranch, totaling 8,100 acres. Both remote subdivisions have extensive wildlife impacts and are distant from city services. Canyon Creek reduced housing density from what was originally approved by 96%. This re-plat included the elimination of 329 housing units and a commercial village. In July 2013, the county commissioners unanimously approved a dramatically re-structured project that eliminated all commercial uses to instead consist of only 21 large ranch parcels ranging from 43-166 acres. After two years of several re-plat proposals and extension requests, the Canyon Creek development team ended up becoming quite serious about redesigning their project to reduce environmental and wildlife impacts.

- * VARD staff worked proactively with Glacier Bank (owner of River Rim since 2010) to redesign River Rim Ranch so it might have more success finding a willing buyer to purchase the 5,500-acre unfinished resort development. The re-plat included the elimination of 150 residential lots and increased the open space by 588 acres. The completion of the proposed golf course was also made optional. This complicated re-plat process involved thousands of acres land that had been sold off to dozens of property owners and millions of dollars in incomplete infrastructure.

VARD as a collaborative force:

- * Working with other nonprofit organizations and the Idaho Associations of Cities and Counties, VARD helped mobilize a statewide awareness campaign which directly helped defeat harmful Idaho House Bills 136 and 160. House Bill 136 (HB 136) would have made land-use planning "optional" in Idaho and was held in committee. House Bill 160 looked a lot like a Proposition 2, Round 2 (if you remember from 2006). Fortunately, HB 160 stalled out and was never brought up in committee. This bill (HB 160) is a regulatory takings bill that would have crippled local planning in Idaho.
- * Working with Conservation Voters for Idaho Education Fund & Strong Towns, and in partnership with Teton Valley Business Development Center, VARD hosted a Teton Valley Curbside Chat for discussing new strategies for the economic realities facing America's towns and how to become a stronger and more resilient community.
- * VARD worked with local, regional and national conservation groups to support strategic mapping and in-depth analysis of innovative conservation opportunities in Teton Valley. The exceptional natural, scenic, and cultural amenities in Teton Valley make this the perfect place to develop new and exciting programs that combine strategic conservation with market-based incentives to achieve ecologically and economically beneficial development. With the help of diverse partners, VARD is looking forward to working with willing property owners and engaged community members to develop new projects and programs inspired by our Tetons to the Teton campaign.
- * Working with the staff of the Western Land and Communities joint venture between the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Sonoran Institute, VARD staff published *Arrested Developments*, a tools and best-practices manual for dealing with zombie subdivisions. Through this joint venture VARD staff also published *Addressing Excess Development Entitlements*, a "Lessons Learned" paper giving a historical perspective on how Teton County's present oversupply of subdivision lots came to be, and what policies and tools have been implemented to address these issues.