

## Teton County Best Practices Analysis

### Stewardship Requirements or Incentives

Active stewardship is nearly always necessary to maintain or restore the conservation value of open space (Chape et al. 2005), particularly in rural residential landscapes (Lenth et al. 2006, Glennon and Kretser 2013). We emphasize that stewardship requirements or incentives associated with particular PRDs and/or conservation easements should be determined in consultation with the Natural Resources Overlay (NRO) and should coordinate with the wildlife-friendly design and management standards and individual resource protection tools that will be developed as part of the NRO update.

The following suite of stewardship activities could be required or incentivized on the open space portion of a PRD, or could be mandated as part of the donation or purchase of a conservation easement. Ideally, the intensity of these stewardship requirements or incentives would be scaled to the current or potential value of the property for wildlife or other natural resources of value to Teton County.

#### **1) Wildlife-friendly fencing**

Instead of offering blanket exemptions to lands in agricultural use, the county could establish a program to pay for or subsidize new wildlife friendly fencing on those properties that provide the highest value to wildlife, such as lands that are located within corridors for migrating or dispersing species. Hanophy (2009) provides specific recommendations regarding standards for fencing to reduce wildlife mortality.

#### **2) Minimize human-wildlife conflict**

Open space within areas with more frequent records of human-wildlife conflict could be subject to stricter stewardship standards. For example, these standards could include restrictions on wild animal feeding or management of refuse.

#### **3) Domestic animal control**

Dogs and cats that are not leashed have consistently been identified as having significant impacts on wildlife populations (Lepczyk et al. 2004; Lenth et al. 2008). Domestic cats and dogs should not be permitted to wander freely within the open space portion of PRDs or conservation easements that have the objective of providing quality habitat for wildlife.

#### **4) Outdoor noise and lighting standards**

The degree to which introduced light and noise levels impact wildlife is dependent on the species or taxonomic group, the intensity or frequency of the light or noise source, and background or natural noise, light, and topography. Some restrictions on outdoor lighting and noise, such as downward-directed light, are already included in the Land Development Regulations. Specific

recommendations for additional standards would follow from identified species or groups of species of concern.

## **5) Ecological restoration and invasive species management**

In some landscapes, natural communities will require active restoration, including invasive species control, to maintain conservation value. Cost-share programs exist in other counties to help offset the expense of controlling invasive species, a stewardship activity that often benefits landowners (by maintaining the economic and aesthetic value of the land) as well as natural resources. Active restoration of ecologically sensitive/important areas such as riparian corridors, wetlands or unique plant communities could also be encouraged through a cost-share program or a competitive grants program, or required as a condition of a donated conservation easement. The county should provide guidance (via ecologically trained professionals) to landowners engaged in these types of stewardship activities.

### **Literature Cited**

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