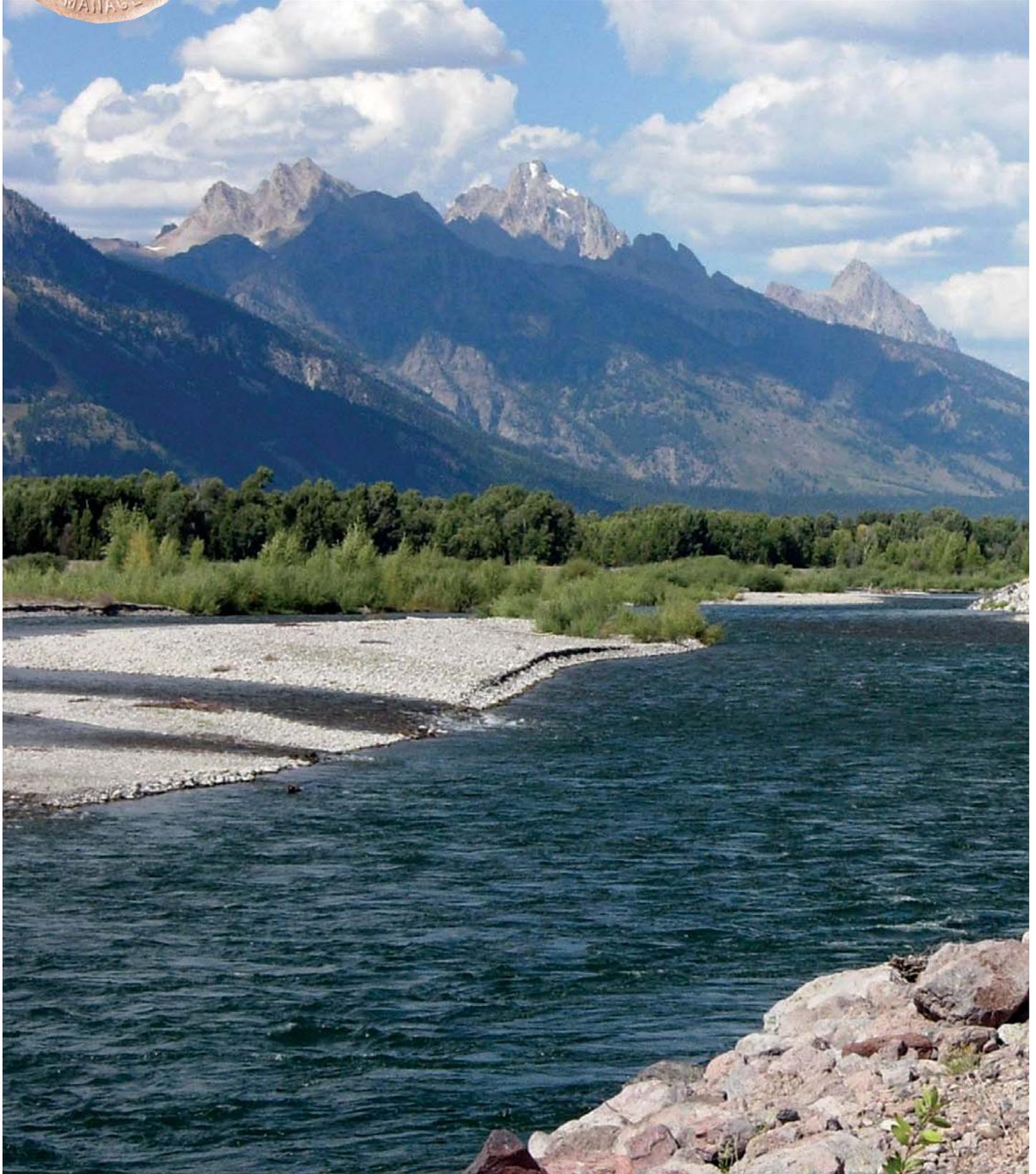




*SNAKE RIVER CORRIDOR  
MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP  
TRANSFER PLAN*

**APRIL 2008**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This project was made possible by funding from the Snake River Fund, Teton County, Wyoming, the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, the Wyoming Community Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, The National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program, and the Laura Jane Musser Fund.



# SNAKE RIVER CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP TRANSFER PLAN

**April 2008**

Prepared for:

*Bureau of Land Management - Pinedale Field Office*

*Snake River Fund*

*Bridger-Teton National Forest*

*Teton County*

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# INTRODUCTION





# INTRODUCTION



## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The original Jackson Hole land surveys in the late 1800s ended at “meander lines” established at the outer banks of the Snake River. At that time, the Snake River consisted of braided channels that were a mile or more wide in some areas. Lands within the meander lines were omitted from the official U.S. survey and remained in public ownership. In the 1950s, levee construction along the Snake River separated many omitted lands from the active channel. Most of these lands reverted to the adjacent private landowners after litigation in the 1970s and 1980s. A series of parcels that were not titled to adjacent landowners remain in the public domain, under the ownership and management of the Bureau of Land Management.



In 1999, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) initiated a process to develop a Snake River Resource Management Plan (RMP) to provide a comprehensive and environmentally adequate framework for managing and allocating uses of the 24 scattered parcels (totaling about 1,200 acres) along the Snake River. In April 2004, the BLM issued its Record of Decision (ROD). Through the ROD, the BLM adopted the Snake River RMP, which provides for the disposal of the parcels from BLM administration, while ensuring that the lands remain in public ownership and available for recreation, public access, open space, and wildlife habitat.

## PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to provide the Snake River Task Force with the information and tools to initiate the transfer of BLM parcels to other entities, and a framework for the long-term management of these parcels as an interconnected network of public lands along the Snake River.

- The *Introduction* section includes background information that is relevant to the long-term ownership and management of the BLM parcels.
- The *Parcel Analysis* section provides a detailed summary of the parcels including resource values, management issues, and existing uses.
- The *Planning Process* section provides a summary of efforts to engage individual and group stakeholders and the public, as well as the feedback obtained from those meetings.
- The final recommendations for the long-term ownership and management of the BLM parcels, as well as key steps to implement those recommendations are included in the *Implementation Recommendations* section.
- More information on Task Force member organizations, a description of a conceptual river camp program, estimated capital and management unit costs, river corridor case studies, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for cooperative management, and Parcel Analysis Report on compact disc (CD) are included as appendices.





The information provided in this report is intended to provide a basis for long-term ownership and management recommendations. As such, this report does not contain detailed information about specific resources. Detailed resource information for each parcel was documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Snake River RMP, and can be obtained from the BLM office in Pinedale, Wyoming.

## **PLANNING AREA**

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This plan is focused on the BLM-owned parcels along the Snake River and Gros Ventre River between Grand Teton National Park and South Park Bridge (U.S. Highway 89/191). The planning area is located within Teton County, Wyoming. There are 18 non-contiguous BLM parcels along about 20 miles of the Snake River.

### **Parcel Boundaries and Mapping**

Parcel mapping for this planning process was provided by the BLM. Considering the unusual circumstances under which these parcels were established, and the fact that parcel boundaries change over time as the Snake River meanders through its floodplain, there are discrepancies between various map sources over the exact boundary and shape of some of these parcels.

This planning effort used the same parcel map boundaries that were used during the Snake River RMP process. Many of the parcels have been surveyed by the BLM and/or private surveyors; others have not. For the purposes of this plan, it is assumed that this BLM mapping is reasonably accurate and is sufficient to direct ownership and management recommendations for each parcel. However, mapping discrepancies do exist, so the exact parcel boundaries shown on the maps in the plan are for planning purposes only and should not be relied upon for an accurate delineation of property boundaries.

## **SUMMARY OF THE SNAKE RIVER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS**

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The BLM initiated the Snake River RMP process in 1999, with a Scoping Letter and Notice of Intent. Preliminary management alternatives were developed in 2002, and a Draft EIS was released for public review in 2003. A public meeting was conducted in January 2000, and a formal hearing was conducted in March 2003. BLM personnel also met formally and informally with many members of the outfitting and ranching industries and with the general public. The BLM received 68 individual comment letters and 290 form letters about the Draft EIS, and two individuals gave testimony at the public hearing.

Based on the comments received on the Draft EIS, the BLM completed the Final EIS for the Snake River RMP in September 2003. The Proposed Plan that was outlined in the Final EIS was formally adopted by the BLM in April 2004



in a ROD. The Snake River RMP provides for the disposal of the parcels from BLM administration, while ensuring that the lands remain in public ownership and available for recreation, public access, open space, and wildlife habitat (BLM 2003; BLM 2004).



## SNAKE RIVER TASK FORCE

In 2004, a Task Force was established to develop an Implementation Plan for the Record of Decision that reflects the interests, concerns and decisions of the participating parties, and considers public sentiment. Task Force members include:

- *Bureau of Land Management - Pinedale Field Office*
- *Snake River Fund*
- *Bridger-Teton National Forest*
- *Teton County*
- *Wyoming Game and Fish Commission*
- *Jackson Hole Land Trust*

Each Task Force member has an interest in the management of the recreational, cultural, and natural resources of Teton County and is participating in a number of planning efforts with other interested agencies and individuals. In particular reference to the Snake River planning area, each Task Force member has a vested interest in a cooperative and seamless

management model. In an effort to perpetuate this management model, each member of the Task Force agreed to lend its expertise to the project, as outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding. Each Task Force member organization is described in more detail in Appendix A.

## SUMMARY OF THIS PLANNING PROCESS

### Preliminary Parcel Analysis Report

As a first step toward eventual ownership and management recommendations, the Task Force developed a Preliminary Parcel Analysis Report that provided a detailed summary of the parcels including resource values, management issues, and existing uses. The information provided in the report was used to provide a basis for long-term ownership and management recommendations. As such, the report did not contain detailed information about specific resources. Detailed resource information for each parcel was documented in the Final EIS for the Snake River RMP, and can be obtained from the BLM office in Pinedale, Wyoming. This report also includes preliminary recommendations for the ownership and management of each parcel. These preliminary recommendations were included to direct feedback and discussion among Task Force members, key stakeholders, and the general public.





### Public Input

During the planning process, the Task Force solicited comments on the Preliminary Parcel Analysis Report through a number of avenues. The informal public comment period began on October 2, 2006 with individual landowner meetings, continued with stakeholder group meetings from October 16 to October 21, 2006 and concluded on October 26, 2006 with the deadline for receipt of written comments. The Task Force held one public open house meeting in Jackson, Wyoming on October 19, 2006 to solicit issues about the project and comments on the Preliminary Parcel Analysis Report from the public.

The Task Force published a public notice announcing the public open house and soliciting participation in the planning process

in The Jackson Hole News & Guide. The Task Force also sent a press release to the paper and posted the Preliminary Parcel Analysis Report on the Snake River Fund's website ([www.snakeriverfund.org](http://www.snakeriverfund.org)). The public notice was also distributed to about 20 additional public locations within Jackson. This announcement provided information on the Snake River Corridor Ownership/Management Transfer Plan, background from the BLM's Snake River RMP, and the public open house meeting.

During the course of the public and stakeholder meeting process, the Task Force received comments from about 30 individuals. Comments were consolidated and grouped by topic area. Based on the issues and recommendations identified in the public and stakeholder meeting process, several key issues were identified:

- River camps
- Signage
- Current use by outfitters
- River management from Wilson Bridge to South Park Bridge
- Considerations for South Park development

Information gathered during the public- and stakeholder-meeting process regarding some issues was used to assist the Task Force to finalize the Parcel Analysis Report (Appendix F) and in the development of this plan. Other issues, such as river management, will need to be addressed in the future by the Task Force.