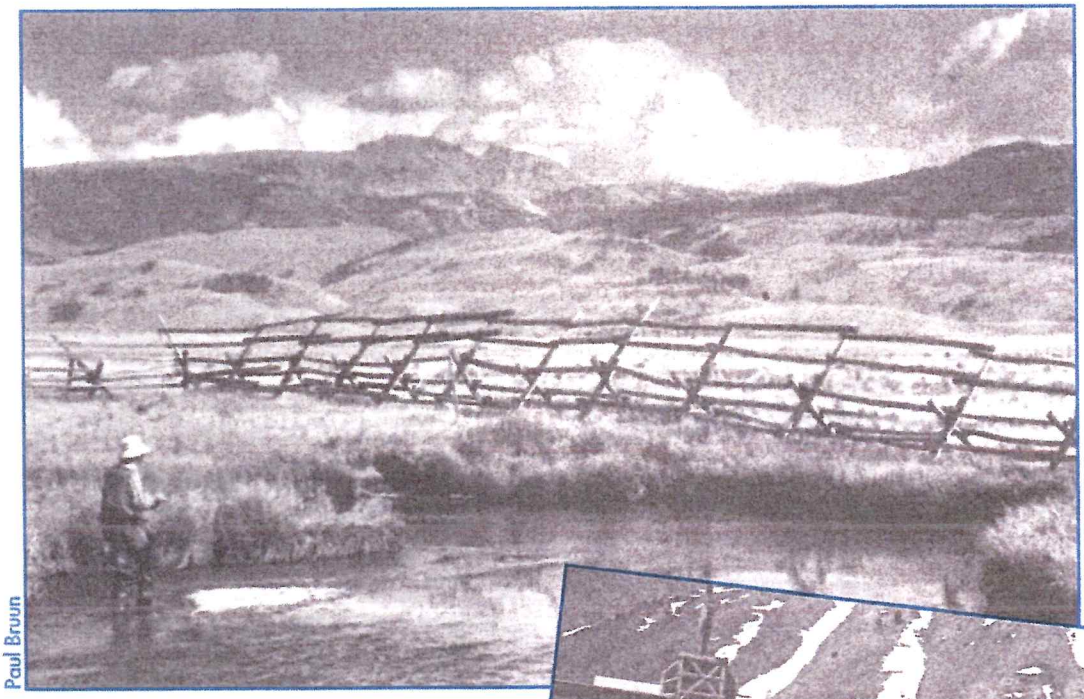
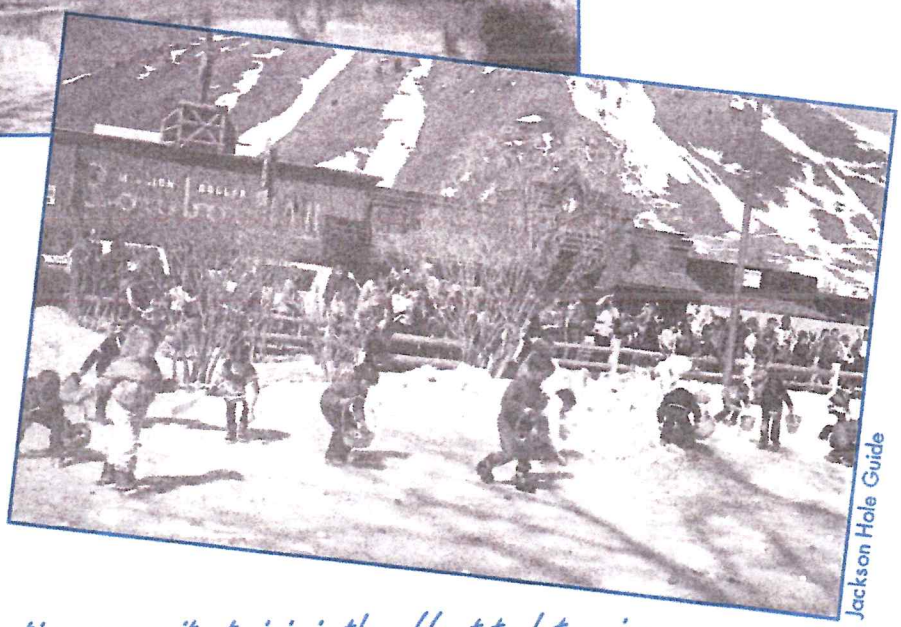
MARK O

Planning for a Successful Community



Paul Bruun



Jackson Hole Guide

This booklet is an invitation to the entire community to join in the effort to determine Jackson Hole's future. Your care for Jackson Hole is all that is required —

Sponsors

Audio Video Country
Bruce Hawtin Architect
Carman Electric, Inc.
Contract Design
Diane Benefiel Graphics
Dunlap Distributing
Ely & Associates
Fish Creek Bed & Breakfast
Foodtown
Grand Teton Lodge Company
Hire-A-Husband
Jackson Hole Alliance
Jackson Hole Athletic Club
Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce
Jackson Hole Cinema
Jackson Hole Guide
Jackson Hole Racquet Club Resort
Jackson Hole Ski Corporation
Jedediah's Original House of Sourdough
Jorgensen Engineering
Key Bank of Wyoming
KMTN
KSGT
KZJH
Knobe's Office Supply
Lance's TV
Meridian Group
Moosely Seconds
Mountain Camera Supply
N.E.S., Inc.
New York City Sub Shop
Pamida
Peter Moyer Law Office
Plaza Liquors
Quality Photo Lab
Riddell Advertising & Design
Signal Mountain Lodge
Sirk Shirts
Skinny Skis
Teton County Board of Commissioners
Teton County Heritage Society
Teton Motors, Inc.
Teton Pines
Teton Tree House
Valley Bookstore
White Glove
Wyoming Futures 22
Wyoming Woolens

Endorsers

Bridger–Teton National Forest
Grand Teton National Park
Jackson Town Council
League of Women Voters
Real Estate of Jackson Hole
St. John's Hospital
Teton Community Mental Health Center
Teton County Board of Realtors

Special Thanks to

Booklet Author: Jonathan Schechter
Booklet Design: Computermation
Booklet Printing: Pioneer of Jackson Hole
Photos Jackson Hole Guide files
Jackson Hole News files
Economic and Demographic Analysis:
Jonathan Schechter, Summit Management Consulting; provided courtesy of the Jackson Main Street Association

Introduction

Two features distinguished the Successful Communities Workshop. The first was the large number and range of sponsors: never before had so many organizations, representing the entire spectrum of local political and philosophical views, joined together to consider Jackson Hole's future.

The second distinguishing feature was the presence of Luther Propst, the field director of the Conservation Foundation's Successful Communities Program. Propst served as facilitator for the Workshop, and shared the knowledge he has gained from years of studying and assisting communities trying to shape their futures.

Over 300 people attended one or more of the Workshop's sessions. This booklet is an attempt to convey the central ideas presented during the three days. It is also an attempt to stimulate even broader-based participation in shaping Jackson Hole's future.

On March 1, 2, and 3, 1990, a SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES WORKSHOP was held for residents of Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Sponsored or endorsed by over 50 local organizations — public, private, and non-profit — the Workshop resulted from a widespread and growing concern about Jackson Hole's future.

Where to Look

This booklet is organized along the lines of the Workshop's agenda

Where We Are — An Economic and Demographic Profile of Teton County from 1970-1990	4-5
Values and Assets Worth Preserving — What Participants Appreciate about Jackson Hole	6-7
Visions — Vision Statements about Jackson Hole's Future	8-9
Shared Values — Common Themes Among the Vision Statements	10-11
Steps Toward the Future — Action Items for Converting Visions into Reality	12
Other Voices — Those Who Felt Excluded	13
Summary: The Author's Observations — The Workshop as a Beginning	14
Successful Communities — An Overview	15
What You Can Do — How to Get Involved in Shaping Jackson Hole's Future	16

Where We Are

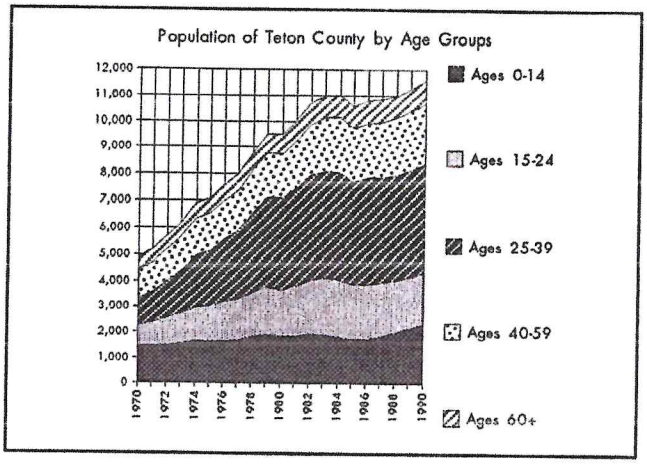
"Despite the increased controls put in place over the last 20 years by communities all around the nation, we see the continued degradation and homogenization of the American landscape — often accompanied by no real improvement in local economies or quality of life."

Before considering where Jackson Hole might be going, Workshop participants wanted to know where it is and has been. In short, Teton County has grown — has boomed — during the past 20 years.

Population

Teton County's population has almost tripled since 1970.

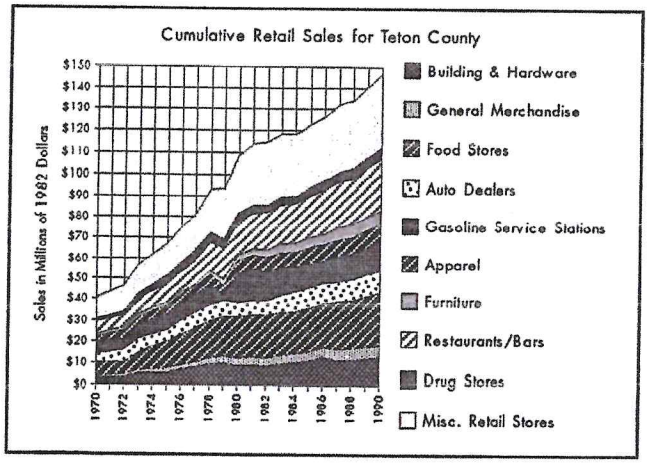
The average resident is 28 years old, but the fastest growth is among those 40 and older.

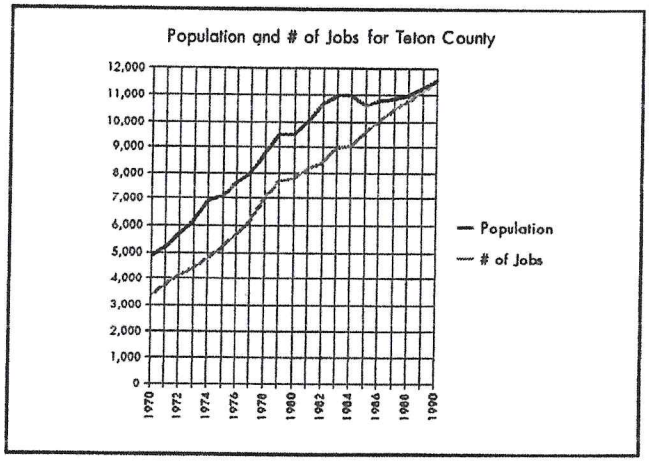


Economy

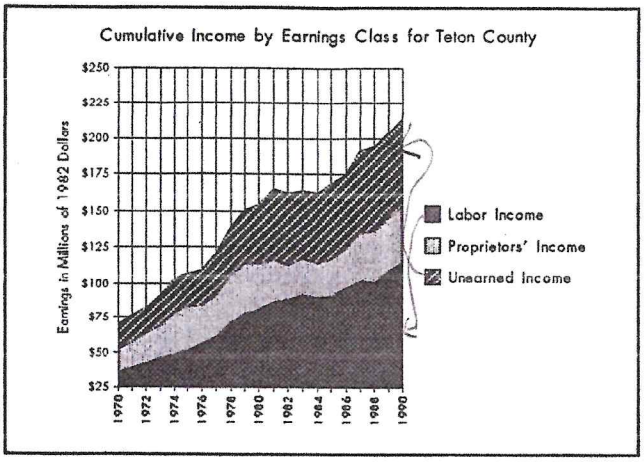
Retail sales drive Teton County's economy. As measured by tax collections, on a constant dollar basis retail sales and the economy as a whole have more than tripled during the last two decades.

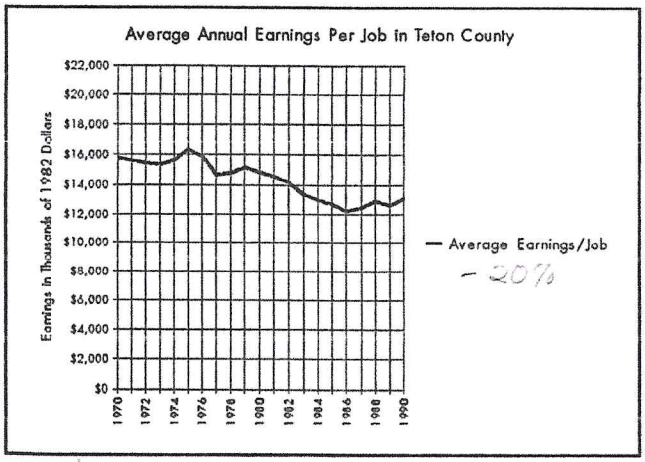
The same is true of the number of jobs in Teton County, and the total amount of income earned by local residents.





Unless otherwise noted, quotes highlighted throughout this brochure are from the Conservation Foundation Successful Communities Program's members and materials.





Consequences of Growth

As the County has grown, benefits have not been shared equally by all parts of society.

In general, those who don't work for a living have done better than those who do.

The average job in Teton County pays 14% less than it did 20 years ago.

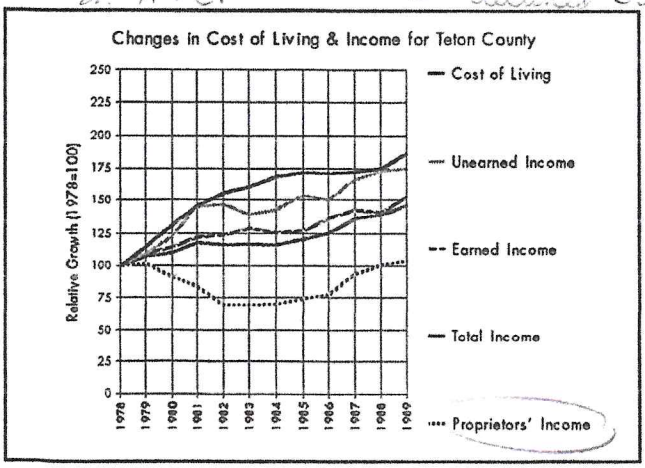
Local cost of living has grown almost 50% faster than the average income per job over the last 20 years.

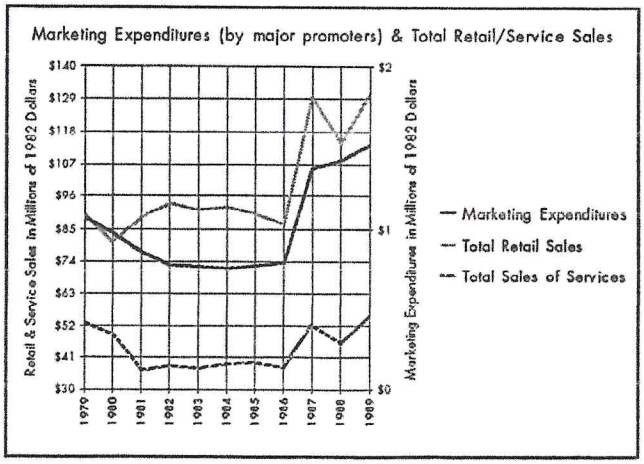
People who own businesses have fared even worse than their employees.

Some Factors Affecting Teton County's Economy

The sharp jump in sales during the past few years corresponds with a sharp jump in efforts to market Teton County, through funds raised by the lodging tax.

Other data suggest that Teton County's economy is particularly sensitive to changes in America's and the world's economies.





Values and Assets Worth Preserving

"Natural and cultural assets are what make a community distinctive. A community's assets and distinctive character are what inspire people, create a sense of concern, and motivate action."

As a first step toward creating a vision of Jackson Hole's future, Workshop participants were asked to identify those things about the community they value and want to preserve.

Participants came together in 10 randomly selected groups, and each group developed a list of everything its members appreciate about life in Jackson Hole. Many groups also developed a list of things they did not like, or things which concerned them about the future.

Natural Assets

Incomparable beauty

Open space

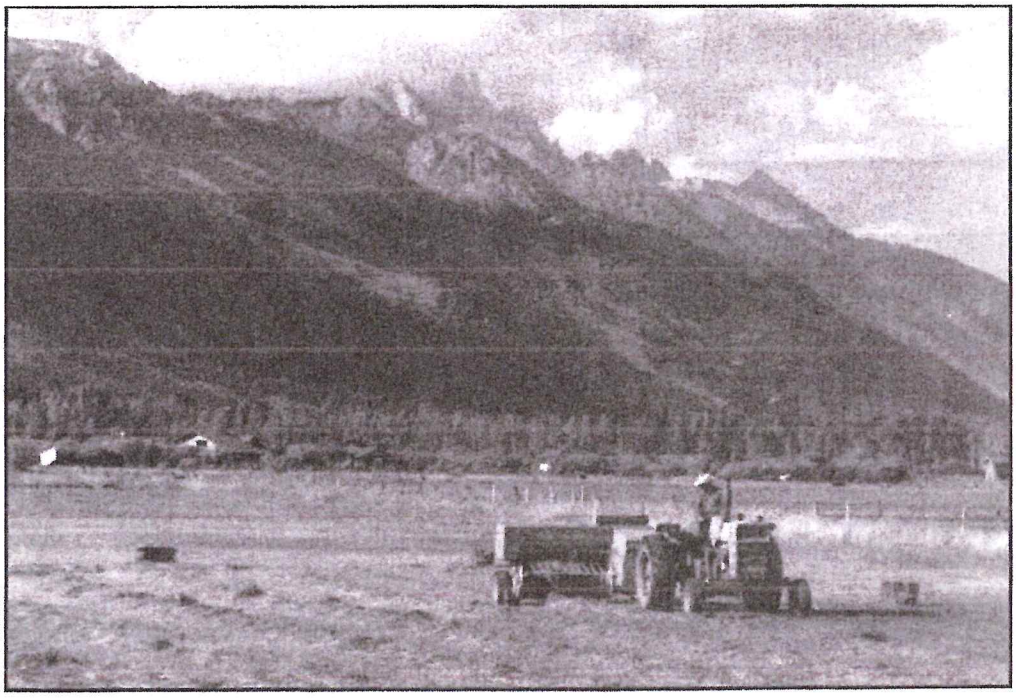
Abundance and variety of wildlife

Abundance and variety of recreational opportunities

Preserved natural environment

Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

Sense of spirituality and power about the land



Bill Willcox

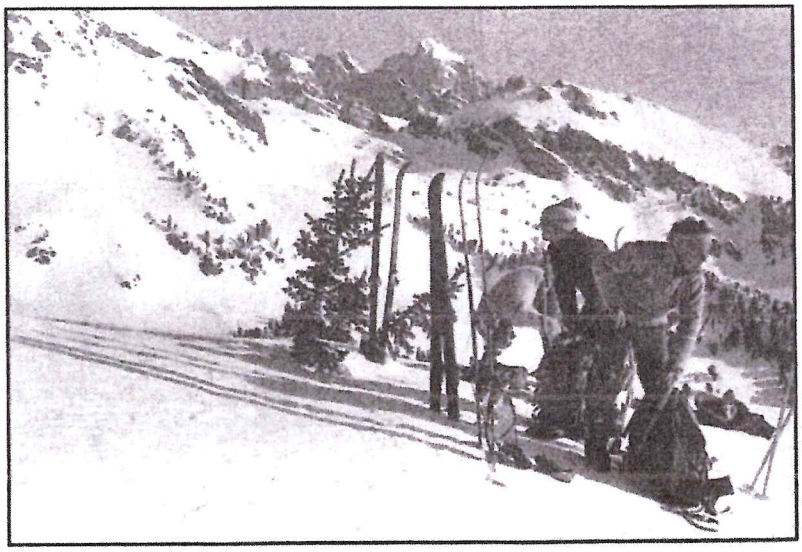
Community Assets

- Small-town size, feeling, and values
- Western ranching heritage
- Sense of community, and degree of community involvement
- Superior quality of life
- A diversity of lifestyles and values, and acceptance thereof
- Quality of public, private, and non-profit services
- Development which complements the land
- Town Square
- Spirit of cooperation and friendliness throughout community
- Emphasis on natural materials in construction
- Unhurried pace
- Relatively unstratified socially
- An appreciation and respect for the environment permeating daily living
- Sense of stewardship for future generations and the rest of the world

Areas of Concern

- Rapid population growth
- Economic and social stratification
- Lack of economic opportunity for middle class
- Lack of future opportunity for children of locals
- Rapid growth threatening small-town values
- Loss of scenic beauty and wildlife habitat
- Diminished air and water quality

"Concerned citizens will not get very far in developing a vision — or opposing a specific development proposal — without focusing their efforts on the positive assets a community has or can create."



Jackson Hole News

Jackson Hole, Wyoming

"Above all else, create a vision for your community's future."

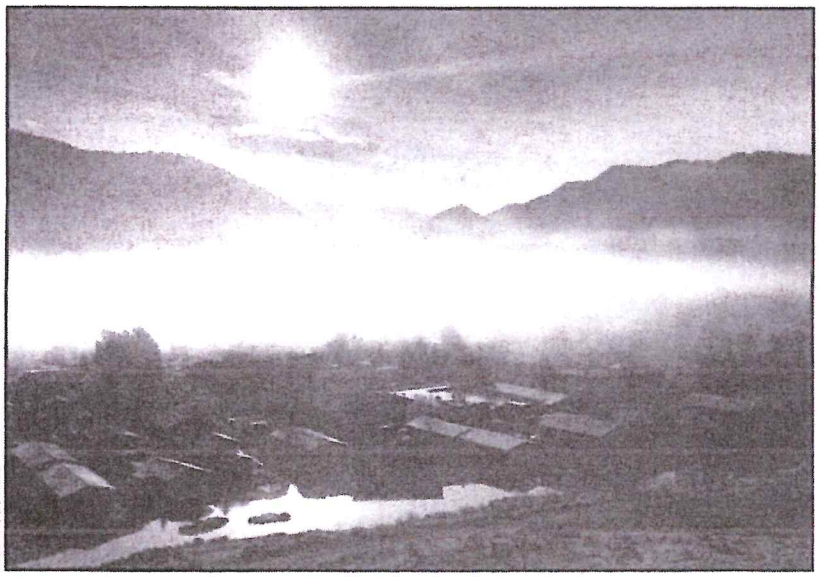
"It is easier to ignite a community with positive vision than with a series of rear-guard actions."

One point has become crystal clear to the Successful Communities Program:

"The key ingredient in helping to bring about a successful community is forging a vision of what the place can be."

To this end, each Workshop group spent a significant amount of time trying to capture its feelings about Jackson Hole in a vision statement.

Vision statements are not intended to be goals or action plans. Instead, they are the foundation upon which goals and plans are based. Ideally, they are clear, concise, uplifting, and enduring.



Bill Willcox

Many common themes were sounded in the vision statements developed by the 10 different groups. Bob Coapman, one of the Workshop's organizers, synthesized the 10 statements into one:

Jackson Hole is a diverse yet cooperative community. It acts through a unified representative government that is responsive to a concerned and involved constituency, and dedicated to managed growth — acknowledging that as in all communities there is a limit to the development which any area can support — using a variety of new as well as "tried and true" planning techniques to promote:

The enhancement and protection of all our natural resources, including the maintenance of open spaces between diverse housing developments;

The maintenance and enhancement of our unique small-town Western heritage, which not only welcomes others but has a very special interest in caring for its own;

The preservation of our historical heritage; and

The growth/development of a diverse economy not dependent on any one segment of economic life.

Many of the individual vision statements focused on a sense of stewardship, for example:

We envision a community in which

future generations, whether living in Jackson Hole or elsewhere, enjoy the same basic qualities we enjoy today:

- Abundant open space
- Abundant wildlife and other natural resources
- Small-town flavor, values, and sense of community
- An active ranching, rural heritage
- Development which complements the area's natural resources
- A diversity of values and lifestyles

Within the vision statements were also found a diversity of aspirations for Jackson Hole. For example, some envisioned a single governmental body for all of Teton County:

We believe that this vision can be most easily accomplished by Jackson Hole viewing itself as one community, speaking through one government.

Some emphasized the importance of growth:

Our community promotes quality economic growth and development which is not dependent on population growth, but which provides for the stability of the local community.

Other statements envisioned essentially no growth at all:

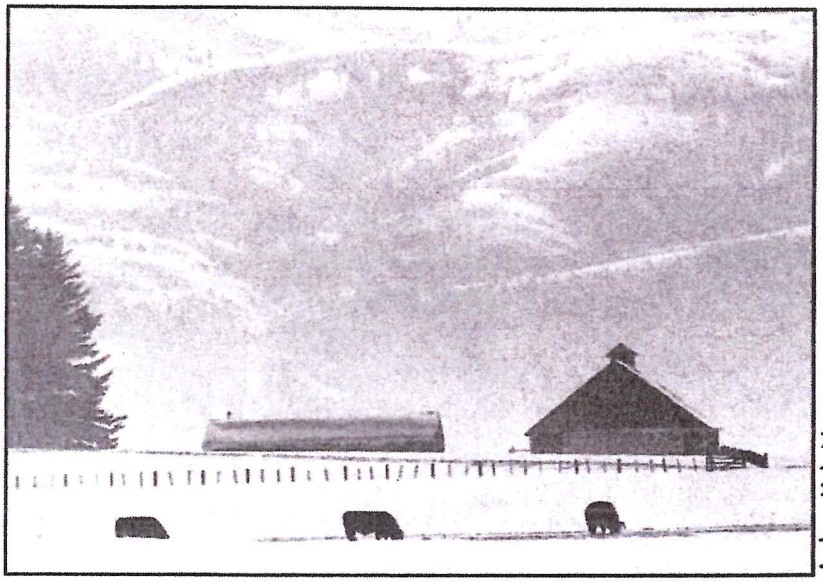
We believe that a much larger community — whether measured by population, dollars, traffic, number of businesses, or tourist visitation — threatens our vision; therefore, we envision population and commercial growth being carefully controlled and ultimately limited.

Underlying the visions of most participants was a respect and sense of appreciation for the legacy left by those who settled and developed Jackson Hole, those people who made Teton County what it is today. Two visions captured these feelings:

One unified community called Jackson's Hole, the Valley's original name.

No losers, no victims. Those who gave us our ranching heritage should be rewarded for their stewardship of their land, regardless of what they choose to do with it.

"The principal shortcoming in many communities is local land use policy that is reactive rather than proactive. The vision...needs to stay out front."



Jackson Hole News

Shared Values

"You need to find out what the community really, really wants. Reach out — broaden the process. If the majority doesn't like something, or if a strident minority doesn't like something, rethink it."

From the 10 vision statements created during the Workshop, participants identified a number of common themes. The elements mentioned most frequently — the elements the participants most want to see in Jackson Hole's future — were:

Maintaining the high quality of the environment

Protecting wildlife

Maintaining economic and social diversity

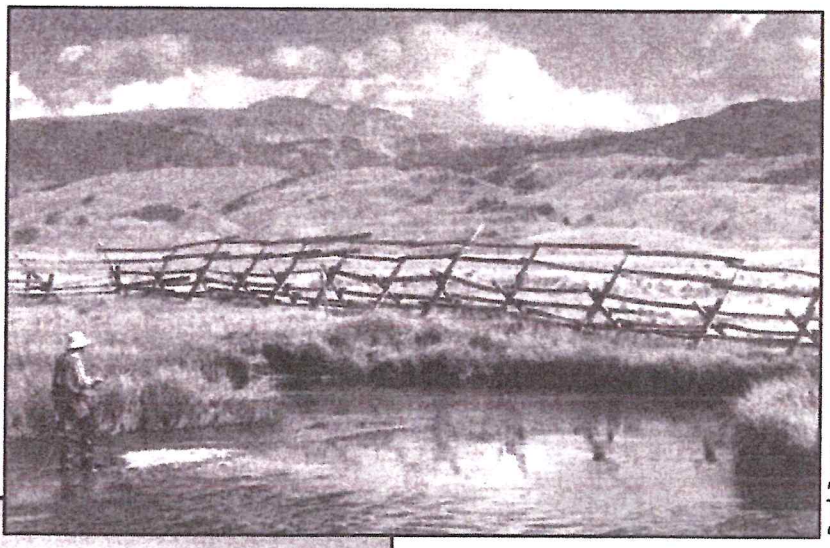
Using growth management techniques to maintain Teton County's small-town atmosphere, Rural heritage, and Western flavor and architecture

Maintaining open space and recreational opportunities

Justly compensating landowners for land they wish to sell



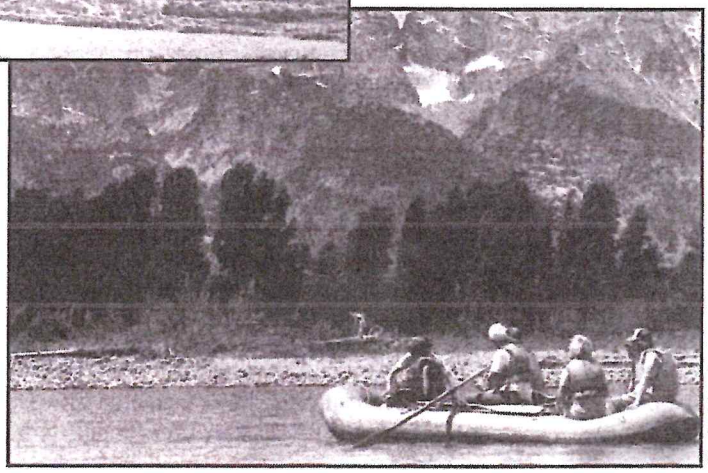
Jackson Hole Guide



Paul Bruun



Jackson Hole News



Ted Wood

Steps Toward The Future

"...the real power to address (growth issues) is at the local level. It is here where the day-to-day decisions are made that determine the quality of our communities."

"Individual citizens in fact do make a tremendous difference in community after community. A challenge for local leaders is to find or construct ways to channel these energies constructively for proactive efforts that truly benefit the entire community."

The final section of the Workshop was devoted to developing specific steps the community can take to bring about the future represented by the vision statements.

Because of time limitations, each group focused on only two of the six items, and developed specific steps for achieving these goals. Many of the steps are applicable to more than one category of shared values.

Preservation of the High Quality of the Environment

Air Quality:
Limit road development
Improve mass transit and bike lanes
Encourage high-efficiency wood stoves and solar energy use
Cluster development

Water Quality:
Centralize waste water treatment
Reward water conservation

Environment in General:
Unify the two governments
Develop comprehensive planning and development guidelines
Encourage community involvement in development decisions
Encourage environmental education

Wildlife Protection

Fund acquisition of wildlife habitat, using bed tax or real estate transfer tax

Wildlife Protection (con't.)

Develop complete habitat inventory for the entire county
Add wildlife expert to planning staff
Develop interagency wildlife board between local, state, federal governments

Encourage Economic and Social Diversity

Develop affordable housing
Encourage and develop non-tourism based, low-impact industries

Growth Management

Unify planning commissions and staffs
Develop joint town/county development plan
Control amount and location of commercial square footage
Use TDRs — Transfer of Development Rights — where appropriate
Establish a population ceiling for planning purposes

Preservation of Jackson Hole's Quality of Life

Develop design and landscaping guidelines and regulations
Encourage local ownership of businesses
Use bed tax for local needs rather than promotion
Develop complete aesthetic inventory of county's lands

Just Compensation

Use bed tax for open space acquisition
Coordinate open space protection and acquisition goals of government and the Jackson Hole Land Trust

Other Voices

One of the strengths of a successful community is its ability to develop a consensus about the community's future.

Consensus does not mean that everyone agrees. Consensus means that all parties are heard and feel heard. From this consensus-building process can come a vision which truly incorporates all views within the community. Such a vision has the best chance of becoming reality.

Although the Workshop brought together over 300 people, over 11,000 people permanently reside in Jackson Hole. Millions more have visited the Valley and care about its future. Despite efforts to represent and incorporate the range of opinions about Teton County held by its residents and friends, there were those at the Workshop who felt that not all these voices were heard:

"[The conference lacked input from] that large silent majority. It's mostly people who are well-off who can take a day off work. The average working man can't do that."

A Workshop Participant

"I didn't see any housewives, except a very few, or schoolteachers, except a very few, or dishwashers. Basically the same people who have been involved in planning for years and years showed up."

A Workshop Participant

"This so-called community activity was rigged so that no worker could attend. The remittance men — and, of course, women — however, attended in abundance."

From a Letter to the Editor about the Workshop

Perhaps more disturbing, particularly to the Workshop's organizers and sponsors, was that some people who attended the Workshop felt their voices were not reflected in the spirit of the gathering...

"...[people] were sold a bill of goods about the Workshop. The entire thing was based on answering the question: 'What mechanisms can we employ to restrict development in Jackson?' There's damn little relationship between a successful community and running the working man out of Jackson."

A Workshop Participant

... or captured in the vision statements and action plans.

"I was offended by some of the comments. It seems like it's a very, very biased thing they are advocating. They're talking about curtailing and skewing development at the expense of the working person. I don't think they're realistically addressing the problems of Jackson Hole."

A Workshop Participant

"As growth continues, these communities face conflict over local development, conflicts that can pit segments of a community against one another. This can lead to, on one hand, unrealistic and futile calls to stop all change, and on the other hand, equally futile calls to unquestioningly encourage anything called growth."

Summary
The Author's Observations

Traditionally, the summary of a Workshop's proceedings would be titled "Conclusion." For the SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES WORKSHOP, however, "Conclusion" conveys the wrong message: to its participants, the Workshop was the beginning of an effort to actively affect Jackson Hole's future.

The people who attended the Workshop came together out of their love for a very special community, a very special place in this world. Some participants have lived all their lives in Jackson Hole; others are relative newcomers. Some see themselves as stewards of an area internationally renowned for its beauty and majesty; others simply feel that Jackson Hole is the nicest place they know of to live and raise a family.

The motivations don't matter. What does matter is that the mix of people, perceptions, and values is the foundation of Teton County's strength. And it is the hope of the participants that the community will harness its strength and bring all of Jackson Hole's elements together to create a common vision of the area's future. Only in that way can the vision be brought to life.

The Workshop was the first step in this process. It will be judged a failure if it is the last. Regardless of differences in visions, goals, political biases, or motivations, the Workshop's participants share a profound sense of care and concern for Jackson Hole's future. They also share a belief that the future should be decided, to the greatest extent possible, by all of those who currently live here.

These feelings were expressed repeatedly throughout the Workshop. They form the foundation on which the Workshop's participants hope to build Jackson Hole's future. For this effort to succeed will require the help of everyone who cares about Jackson Hole.



Bill Willcox

Successful Communities

What is a successful community? The Conservation Foundation has considered this question at great length. Their conclusion: *"A successful community is a good place to work, to live, to raise a family, and to enjoy leisure time."*

The Foundation also concluded that there are no hard-and-fast elements determining success. Instead, the same intangibles that make each community unique make some communities more successful than others.

As an extension of its study of communities, in 1988 the Conservation Foundation established the Successful Communities Program. The Program offers resources and other help to governments and other organizations attempting to enhance the quality of their communities.

There are common elements shared by successful communities throughout the United States. During its research, the Conservation Foundation identified seven of these:

Successful Communities —

Build their land-use policies around distinctive assets. Successful communities don't try to be like every other town.

Build their land-use policies around a popular vision of what the community can be. People must get excited about what can be, not just angry about what is wrong.

Go beyond ecological and economic considerations in land-use regulation by paying attention to aesthetic concerns. Addressing the intangibles makes a fundamental difference in the quality of life.

Go beyond regulations to protect local resources and secure quality development. Regulations do a better job of preventing the worst than of creating the best.

Are spurred by "hometown heroes," locals who spear-head conservation and planning efforts. Individuals do make a difference.

Have effective quality-of-life lobbies that ensure a positive government response. Citizens must get involved, and not just rely upon government.

Encourage savvy developers and development. Innovative developers promote their ideas to the entire community, and are attracted to communities which work with open minds to achieve quality development.

For more information about the Conservation Foundation and its Successful Communities Program, contact:

The Conservation Foundation
1250 24th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 293-4800

"The challenge that the Successful Communities Program helps address is to build and create in sensitive ways, as well as to preserve and protect."



Jim Evans

Luther Propst, Conservation Foundation Successful Communities Field Director

What You Can Do

"There is a real gap between what's possible and what's happening. What's needed is the community input and the political push."

Jackson Hole has changed greatly, and will continue to do so. The extent that Teton County's residents become involved in trying to affect these changes will be the extent to which Jackson Hole's future will be determined by those who know and love it best.

The Conservation Foundation's Successful Communities Program has spent a great deal of time and energy exploring what residents of small, rapidly changing areas can do to control the destiny of their communities. The most important message they have for Jackson Hole is the most heartening:

If you want to affect your community's future, you can.

How? One way is to become involved in Jackson Hole's Successful Communities effort. To build on the momentum for change established at the Workshop, participants agreed to institute quarterly follow-up meetings, beginning May 3, 1990. Contact 733-9417 for more details on these meetings.

Each of these groups and offices has a strong interest in planning for the future of Jackson Hole. Contact any one of them for more information about getting involved.

Town of Jackson Planning Department — 733-0520

Teton County Planning Department — 733-3959

Jackson Hole Alliance for Responsible Planning — 733-9417

Teton County Heritage Society — 733-1855

Jackson Hole Area Chamber of Commerce — 733-3316

Bridger-Teton National Forest — 733-2752

Grand Teton National Park — 733-2880

National Elk Refuge 733-9212

Wyoming Game & Fish Department — 733-2321

The common elements shared by successful communities offer some guidelines for other types of involvement:

Help improve the aesthetics of your immediate environment

Pick up some trash, plant a tree, smile at a stranger — any little thing can make a big difference!

Become a "local hero" and recognize and encourage those who are

The quality of a community is a result of small actions taken by a number of people. When you see a need, fill it! If you need help, contact any of the sponsoring organizations. Support your friends in their efforts to make Jackson Hole a better place.

Help develop a vision for Teton County

What's important to you about Jackson Hole? What sort of community do you want to see in 5, 10, or 20 years? Talk about it with your neighbors. Write about it to the papers. Tell your elected officials, and vote for those candidates whose vision reflects yours.

Become involved in one or more of the organizations attempting to affect Jackson Hole's quality of life

These organizations span the gamut of views about Teton County's future. The more people an organization represents, the stronger its voice.