

# Teton River Recreation Management Initiative & Waterways Recreation Ordinance

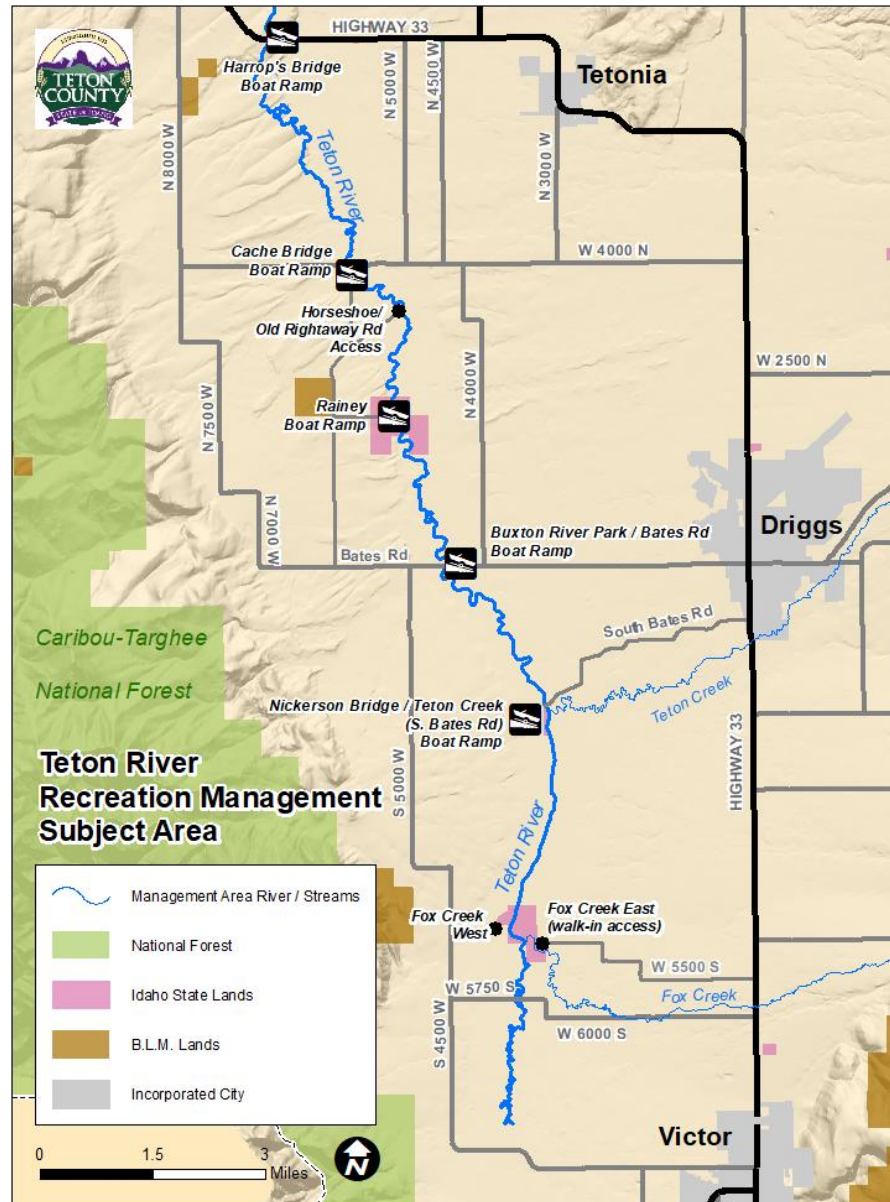


**Rob Marin, GIS Manager & Community Projects Coordinator**

Teton County, Idaho

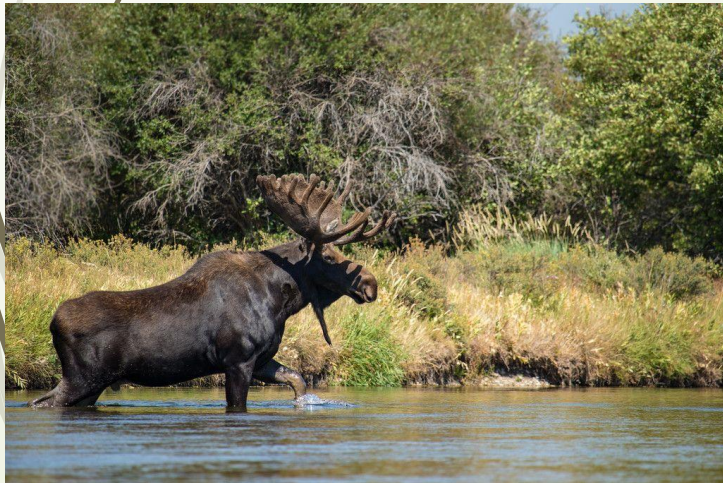
# Management area

- Upper Teton River only
- Idaho Fish & Game manages public launch sites
- Mostly private lands
- County is primary land agency



# The Issue:

## Increasing use in a small, fragile resource



- Steady growth in use over last decade
- 2020 Pandemic spike in visitation
- Growing commercial activity
- Larger float groups
- Compromised user experience
- Floater / angler conflict
- Litter, pet issues
- Extended camping at Rainey access
- Potential for adverse wildlife impacts

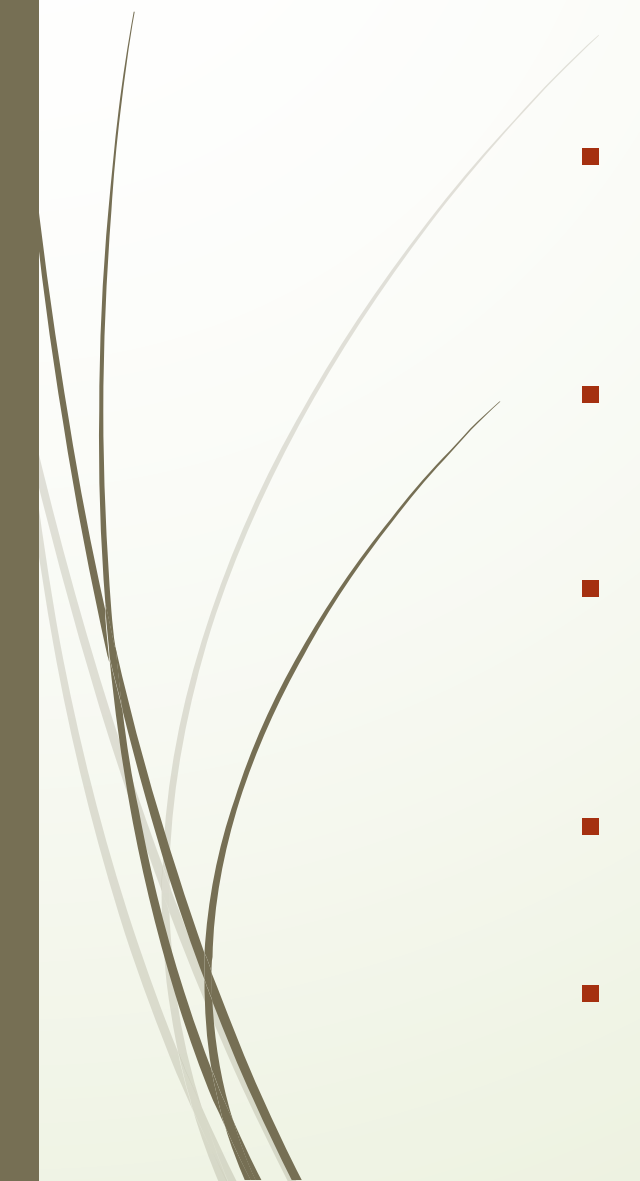
## Initiative origins: 2016-2020

- 2016:  
Citing safety concerns at Bates Rd access,  
County creates Buxton River Park
- 2018:  
**FTR** stakeholder assessment  
**Henrys Fork Foundation** survey, counts
- 2020:  
County, IDFG and Non-profits initiate action





# Management initiative goals



- **Determine County authority to address unregulated commercial activities**
- Establish a river-use baseline (data collection)
- Broad public outreach and development of long-term management strategy
- Create recreation ordinance to establish County authority
- Phase-in policies, starting summer, 2022



# Types of commercial use

- **Guided Fly-fishing Outfitters**

Teton Valley Lodge, WorldCast Anglers, Three Rivers Ranch, Henrys Fork Anglers, Bronze Buffalo Club

- **Commercial operators**

(Unguided rental/shuttle businesses)

Teton River Supply, Wai Mauna SUP

- **Watercraft rental only**

Yostmark, Peaked Sports, Hawkes Canoe Rentals

## Legal authority: Idaho Outfitters & Guides Licensing Board (IOGLB)

- Oversees GUIDED outfitters (fishing, hunting, float trips)
- Currently does NOT limit number of boats on upper Teton
- No authority over unguided rental/shuttle operations

## Legal authority: Idaho Fish & Game (IDFG)



- Regulates fishing and hunting
- Oversees Rainey access site camping
- Can apply conditions for users of IDFG-managed boat ramps

# Idaho Fish & Game (IDFG) limitations



- Cannot prevent commercial launching from private land
- No authority to regulate group size
- Cannot regulate non-hunting/fishing activities on the river

# Summer, 2021: IDFG creates commercial operator use agreement for access sites



- **Aligned with rental/shuttle companies' voluntary commitments**
- County incorporated IDFG rules into ordinance in 2022 (we'll get to these rules)





# Legal authority: Teton County

- Broad authority as lead land agency
- Can institute private & commercial group size limits
- Can regulate commercial operators beyond boat ramps
- Can make recommendations to IOGLB for Outfitter limits
- Can regulate both private users and commercial operators

## Rental-only businesses (no shuttle service)

- Regulatory obstacle: local watercraft rentals not limited to Teton River
- Some rentals come from outside County
- **County not pursuing regulation of sports shops offering watercraft rentals**



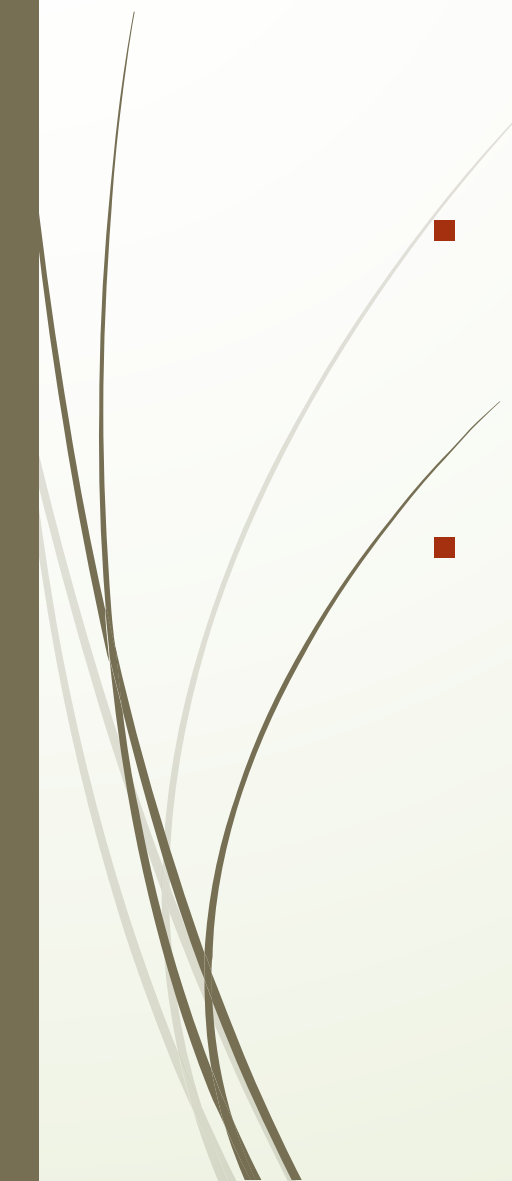


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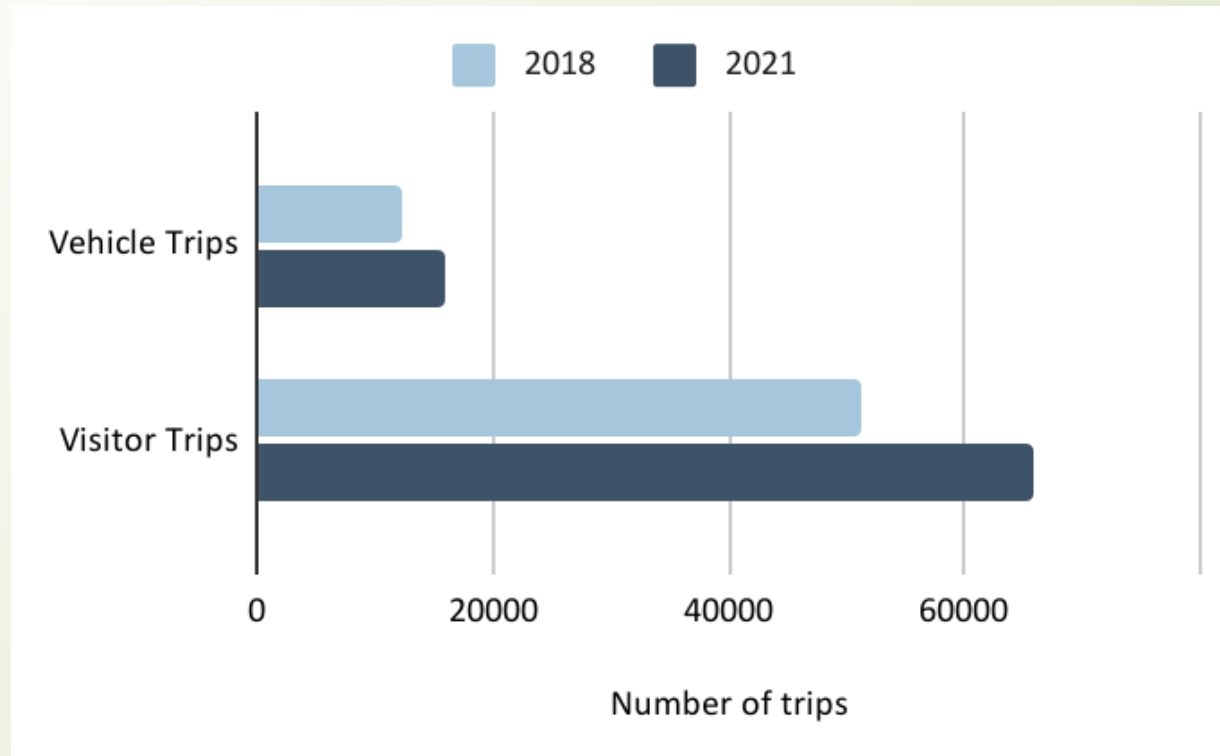


## Summer, 2021 data collection

- Randomized vehicle counts  
(comparable to 2018 HFF counts)
  - 2021: Customer counts from rental/shuttle companies
- 

# Summer, 2021 data collection

- Approximately 26% use increase since 2018
- Estimated 66,000 visitors on Teton in 2021
- **(2022 counts are nearly identical to 2021)**



# Summer, 2021 data collection

- Despite public perception, numbers indicated **only about 7% of estimated total users were commercial rental/shuttle customers**
- Teton River Supply rental/shuttle: approx. 4,300
- Wai Mauna Paddleboards (new business): 275
- Private users have biggest impact



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# Outreach / Stakeholder Meetings, 2021-22

- Rental/shuttle businesses, winter, 2021
- Fishing outfitters, IOGA summer, 2021
- River landowners, fall, 2021
- Agency meetings and discussions  
(IDFG, IOGLB, ID Parks & Rec, ID Dept. of Lands, IDWR)
- Online Survey, fall, 2021
- Two River Charrettes, fall and winter 2021/22
- Public Town Hall, April, 2022

# 2021 River-user survey

September 16 - October 17:

More than 1,400 respondents

## Teton River Recreation Planning

# Public Survey Live Now!

**YOUR PARTICIPATION NEEDED**



Teton County, Idaho Fish & Game, and local non-profits are collaborating to develop recreational management strategies for the Teton River in response to increased use. Your survey responses will help resource managers gain a better understanding of river users' experience on the Teton River and help guide appropriate management actions for the future.

Survey available online until  
October 17th, 2021

CLICK



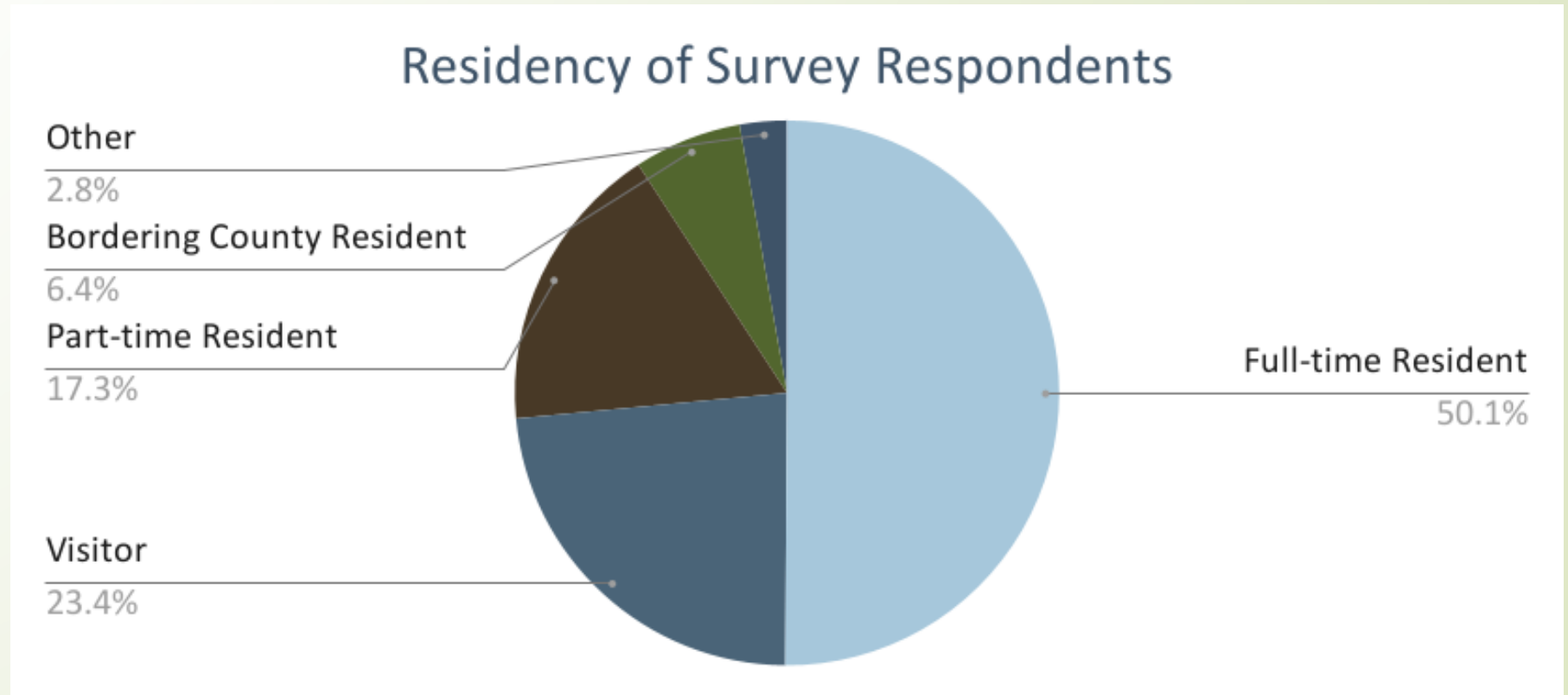
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SCAN

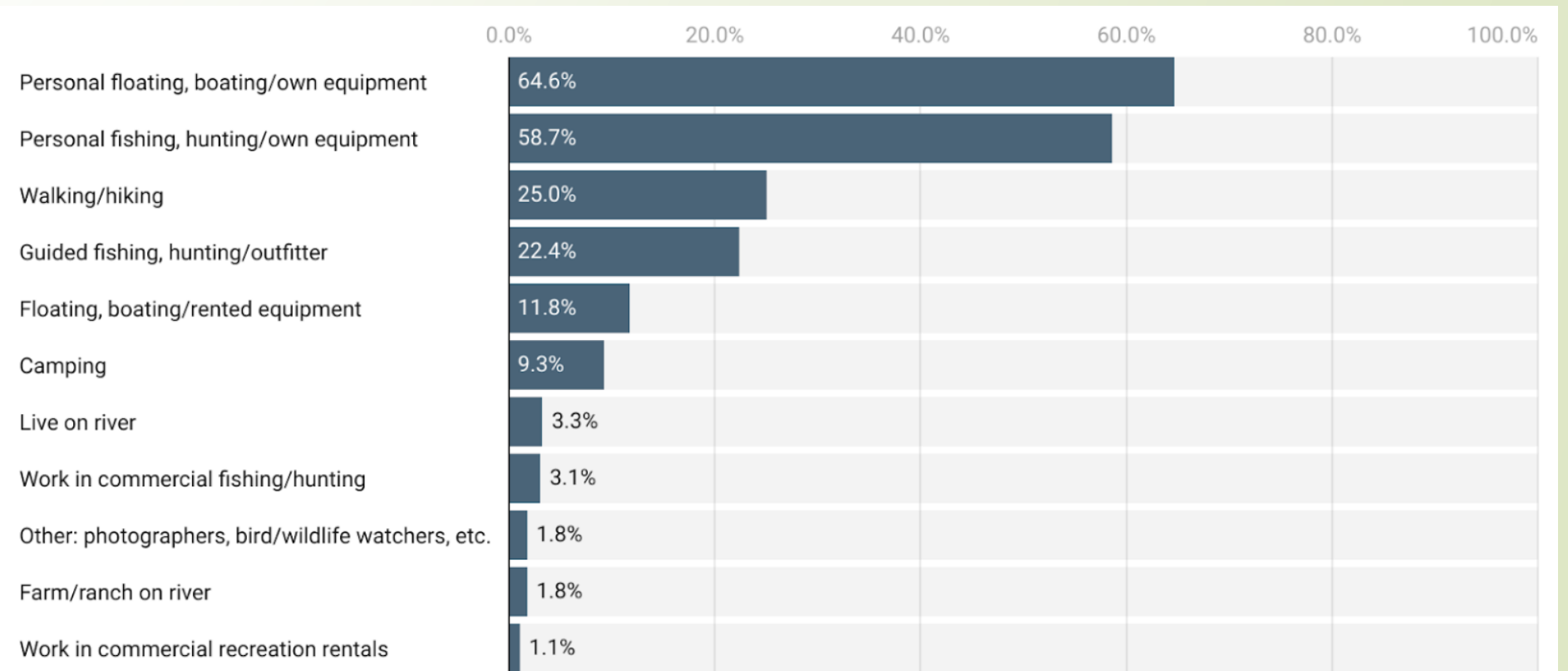
or visit [www.tetoncountyidaho.gov](http://www.tetoncountyidaho.gov)



## Survey results: **Respondents' residency**



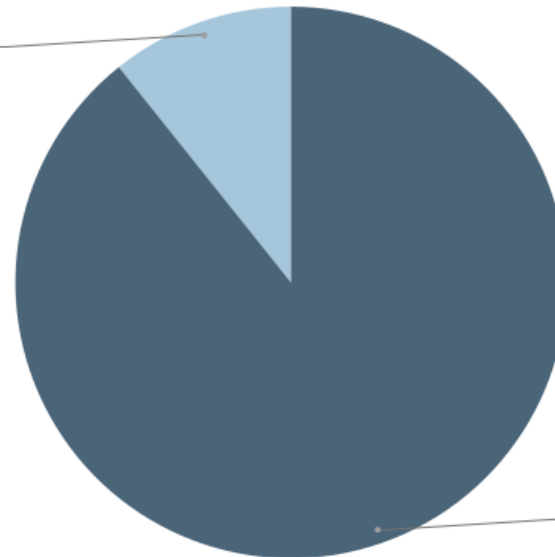
## Survey results: Respondents' stated river uses



## Survey results: **Private vs rented equipment**

- Roughly aligns with collected data on private vs commercial use
- 10.7% indicated use of rented equipment
- 89.3% indicated use of private equipment

River Users with Rented Equipment  
10.7%

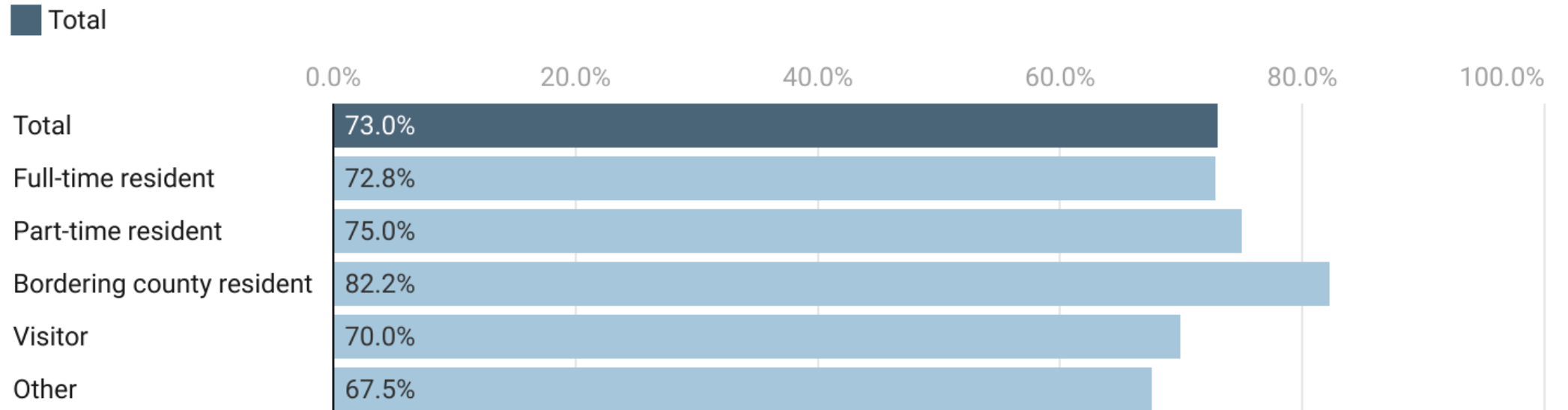


River Users with Personal Equipment  
89.3%

Survey results:

## **Agree or Strongly Agree: Management actions are needed to reduce overcrowding**

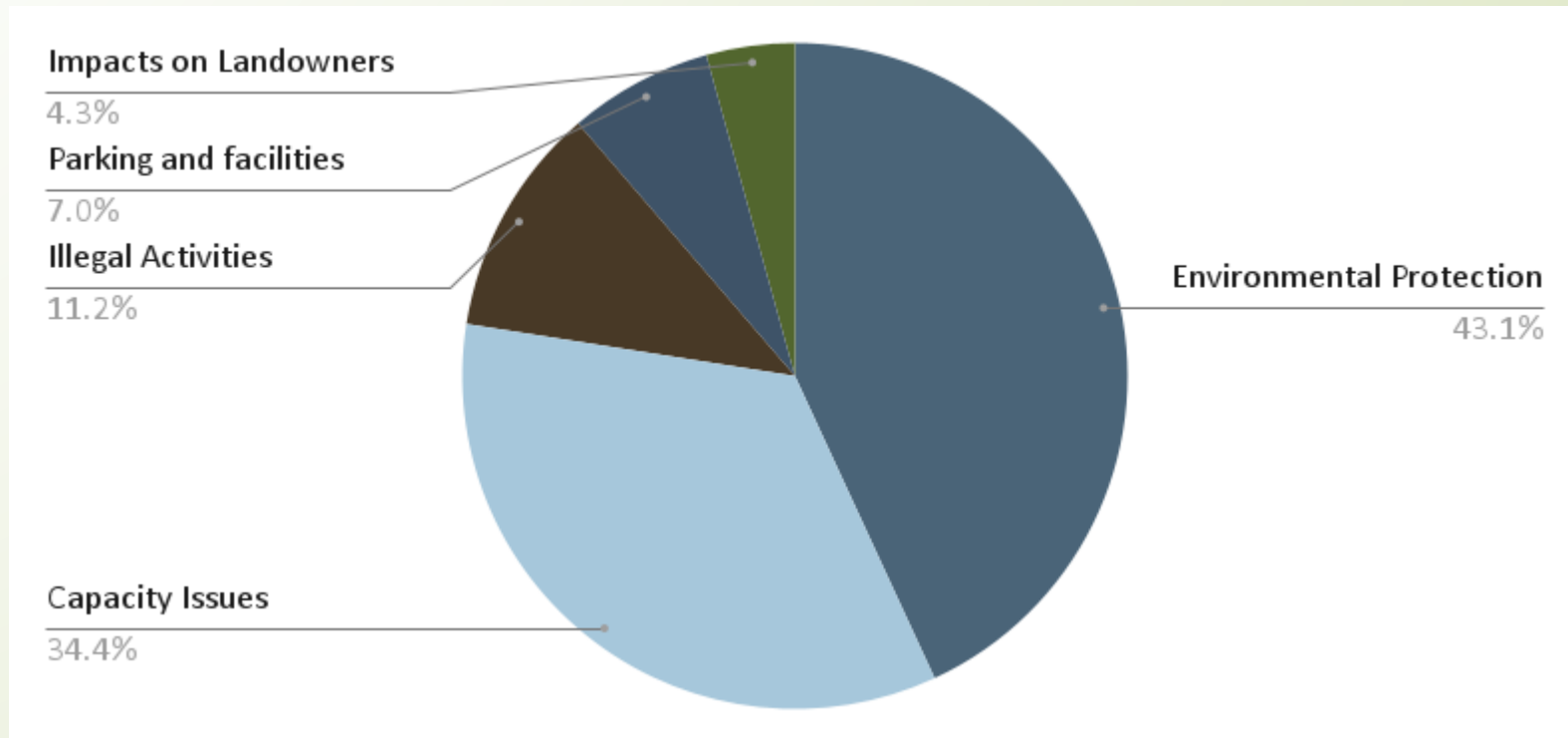
Every user group indicated strong support for management action



Created with Datawrapper

## Survey results: **Top Management Priorities**

Environmental impacts and capacity issues (crowding) rank highest





Survey results:  
**Public Input on Policy Options**  
(2018 Interviews, 2021 Survey)

| Policy                                                                             | Public acceptance<br>(darker = higher acceptance) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Limit Group Size                                                                |                                                   |
| 2. Install Signs                                                                   |                                                   |
| 3. Hire Personnel<br>(e.g. river ranger, camp host to enforce camping stay limits) |                                                   |
| 4. Manage Public Float Passes                                                      |                                                   |
| 5. Manage Parking Fees                                                             |                                                   |
| 6. Limit and/or Require Fees for Rental/Shuttle Operations                         |                                                   |
| 7. Limit Public Use (Days/Times/Numbers Overall)                                   |                                                   |
| 8. Expand Smaller Access Sites                                                     |                                                   |
| 9. Limit Increases in Additional Fishing Outfitters or Trips                       |                                                   |
| 10. Eliminate Camping at Rainey                                                    |                                                   |
| 11. Business As Usual                                                              |                                                   |

# Public River Charrettes

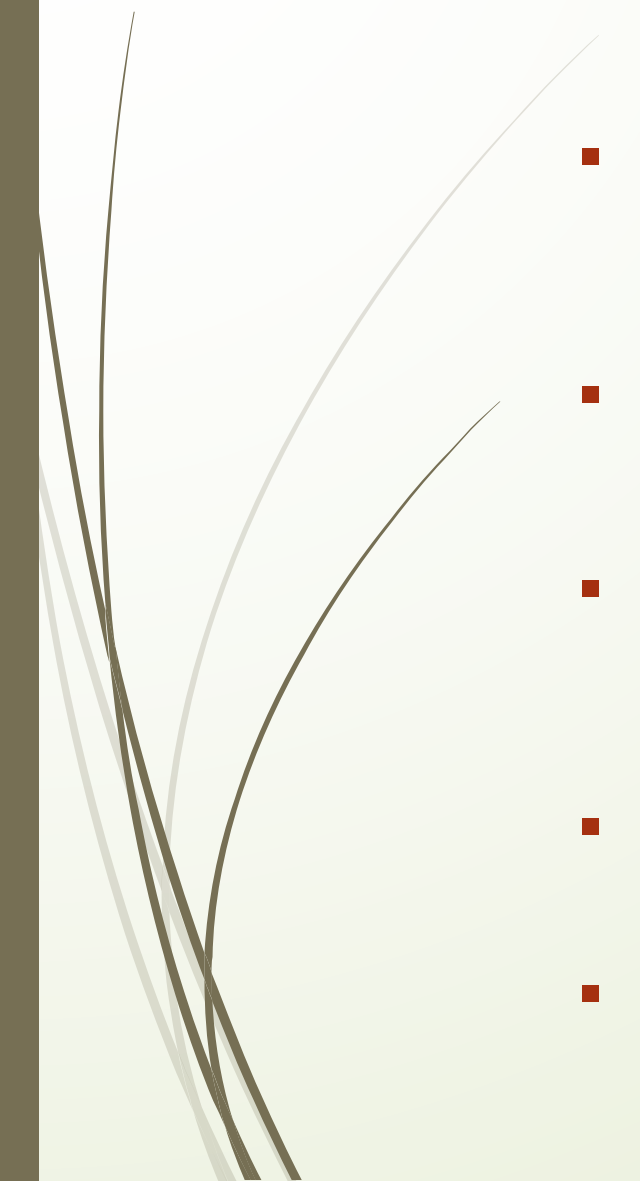
## 11/2021 & 2/2022

- Virtual (Zoom-based) collaborative stakeholder meetings
- Professionally facilitated by Warm Springs Consulting, Idaho Policy Institute
- Funded by Cushman Family (FTR donor)
- 100+ participants attended November charrette
- 80+ attended February charrette
- Breakout sessions: participants suggested & refined policy actions



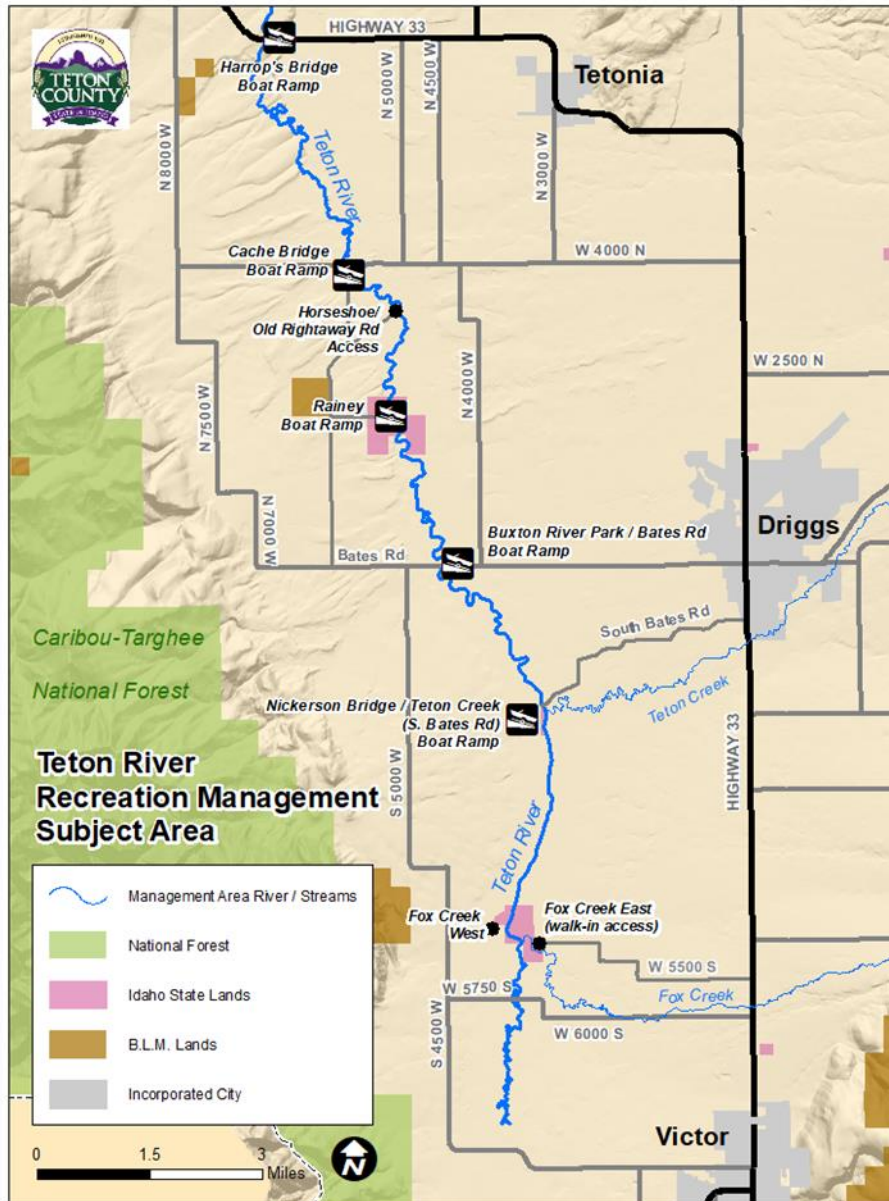


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# Draft Waterways Recreation Ordinance



- Purpose: Protect river resource and maintain a rewarding user experience
- Coverage: Near headwaters to Harrop's Bridge, lower mile of Fox and Teton Creeks

# Draft Waterways Recreation Ordinance



- First Draft: Idaho Policy Institute
- Partially based on other county ordinances
- Teton-specific policies guided by public input
- Board of County Commissioner work session edits

# Draft Waterways Recreation Ordinance



- Reviewed by in-house legal counsel and hired recreation law consultant
- Final public input at 4/27/22 Town Hall Meeting
- Adopted: June, 2022

# Draft Waterways Recreation Ordinance



**Outfitter** (commercial fly-fishing) restrictions:

- **Guided Outfitters NOT regulated by this ordinance**
- Current level of use not an issue
- IOGLB currently limits # of outfitters on upper Teton
- But not number of boats per section per day
- County may direct IOGLB to cap daily boat limit near current use to prevent expansion



# Draft Waterways Recreation Ordinance

## **Commercial Operator** (rental/shuttle) restrictions:

- Includes IDFG requirements, with additions
- Only 2 Commercial operator permits will be issued
- One entity cannot own both permits
- Can launch only at designated public access sites
- Operate between Teton Creek & Cache Bridge only
- 12 total launches/day max, 6 max at Bates or Rainey



# Draft Waterways Recreation Ordinance

## **Commercial Operator** (rental/shuttle) restrictions (continued):

- 15-person group size limit
- Launch no earlier than 9:30 am, off river by 6:30 pm
- Pay per/customer fee to County toward river fund
- Permit expires and reviewed every three years by BoCC
- Permittee has preference for renewal  
(if meeting all requirements)





# Draft Waterways Recreation Ordinance

Restrictions for all users:

- Float-group sizes of 15 persons or less
- Larger groups must break up, launch 15-minutes apart, stay out of sight from each other
- Larger groups must apply for exception



# Draft Waterways Recreation Ordinance



## Restrictions for all users(continued):

- No littering
- No dumping of solid human or pet waste
- No harassment of wildlife
- Dogs leashed or confined to watercraft when feasible
- Dogs under strict and effective voice control on shore
- No transport of invasive plant or animal species



# Draft Waterways Recreation Ordinance



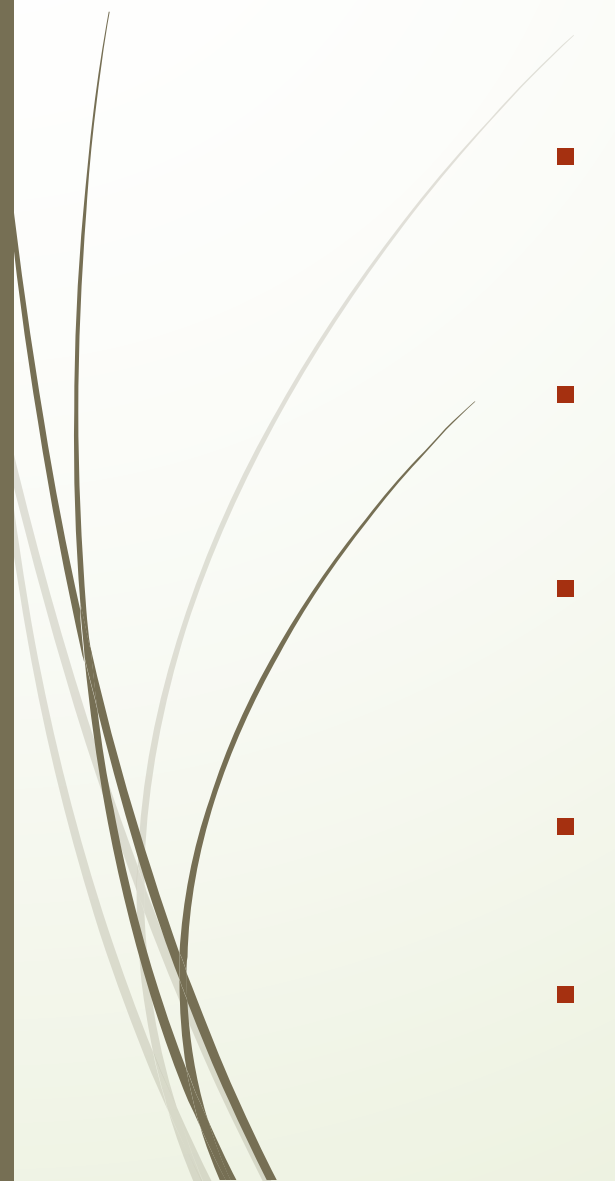
## Parking fees:

- Public and outfitter input favored parking fees over boat passes
- **Paid Parking begins May, 2024**
- **Small daily fee or affordable season pass**
- Revenues to go toward river management and enforcement
- Parking on County Roads within ½ mile of access sites will be prohibited





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Summer, 2022

## FTR Public Education Campaign

- Led by Will Stubblefield, FTR Education Director
- Began public awareness of new regulations
- Developing a culture of river stewardship





# Teton Waterways Recreation Advisory Committee

- Formed late summer, 2022
- Formal volunteer board to advise BoCC
- Represents a variety of stakeholder groups
- Chaired by Joe McFarland,  
USFS Recreation Specialist, Teton Basin Ranger District

# Educational / Enforcement Signage

- Working with IDFG to design and install signage
- Increase public awareness of rules
- Promote better behavior, resource stewardship



# Rainey Bridge (Big Eddy): volunteer camp host hired, Summer 2022

- Volunteer, \$30/day per diem
- Worked with IDFG officers for enforcement
- Immediately eliminated “squatting”



# River Recreation Fund sticker fundraiser

- Based on TVTAP trails fundraising campaign
- Raised about \$3.5k for River Recreation account
- Will supplement state vessel funds
- Starter funds for policy implementation





## River Ambassador / Ranger(s)

- \$15,000 County funds allocated for 2023 wages
- Education / possible enforcement role
- County needs to build funds for future establish recreation administration & staffing

# River Access Improvements

- County applying for grants Fall, 2022
- Maximizing parking, improving efficiency
- Preparing for parking enforcement in 2024
- **Balancing people management with resource management**





## Do we need a more holistic approach to river recreation?

- Henry's Fork, S. Fork of Snake recreation issues
  - Lower Teton River recreation development
  - Which agencies, non-profits, stakeholders should be involved?
- 