

ENJOY SUMMER IN WYOMING!

SPRING & SUMMER 2008

It's time to plan some **summer fun with The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming!** These events offer you a chance to learn firsthand about the places where we work, visit with our staff, and experience Wyoming's great outdoors. *For more information or to sign up, contact Rita Faruki at rfaruki@tnc.org or call 307-335-2132.*

HEART MOUNTAIN HIKE

Saturday, May 24
Heart Mountain Ranch, Powell

BUTTERFLY BLITZ

Saturday, June 14
Red Canyon Ranch, Lander

BIGHORN MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE

Saturday, June 28
Tour Sheridan-area conservation easements

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Do you want to experience nature and learn about wild habitats, all while meeting and working alongside others who love nature? Contact Jody Daline, Volunteer Coordinator, at jdaline@tnc.org or call 307-335-2138.

www.nature.org/wyoming

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The Nature Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

WYOMING UPDATE

SPRING & SUMMER 2008

From the Director

Just when you thought you knew what to expect from The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming, we may have a surprise for you inside. You'll notice something different in this newsletter—a photo of a Maasai tribesman in Kenya's grasslands right next to a picture of a Wyoming rancher. What's the connection?



Andrea Erickson Quiroz
© Joe Kiesecker

In Wyoming, we are connected to people and places we may never know. We share grasslands, believe it or not, with shepherds in Kenya...and also with nomadic herders in Mongolia, and gauchos in Argentina. The lessons we learn here in Wyoming really can make a difference in these places, and vice versa.

While I'm proud to say that our tried-and-true conservation strategies will continue (see our highlight inside on a conservation easement on the historic Pitchfork Ranch), the scale of challenges facing our planet require us to reach more people and more places than ever before. In eastern Wyoming grasslands, for instance, we are reaching out to local communities to safeguard our state's last stretches of intact, native prairie. At the same time, the Conservancy is reaching out to similar communities in Africa, and in other places where grasslands remain.

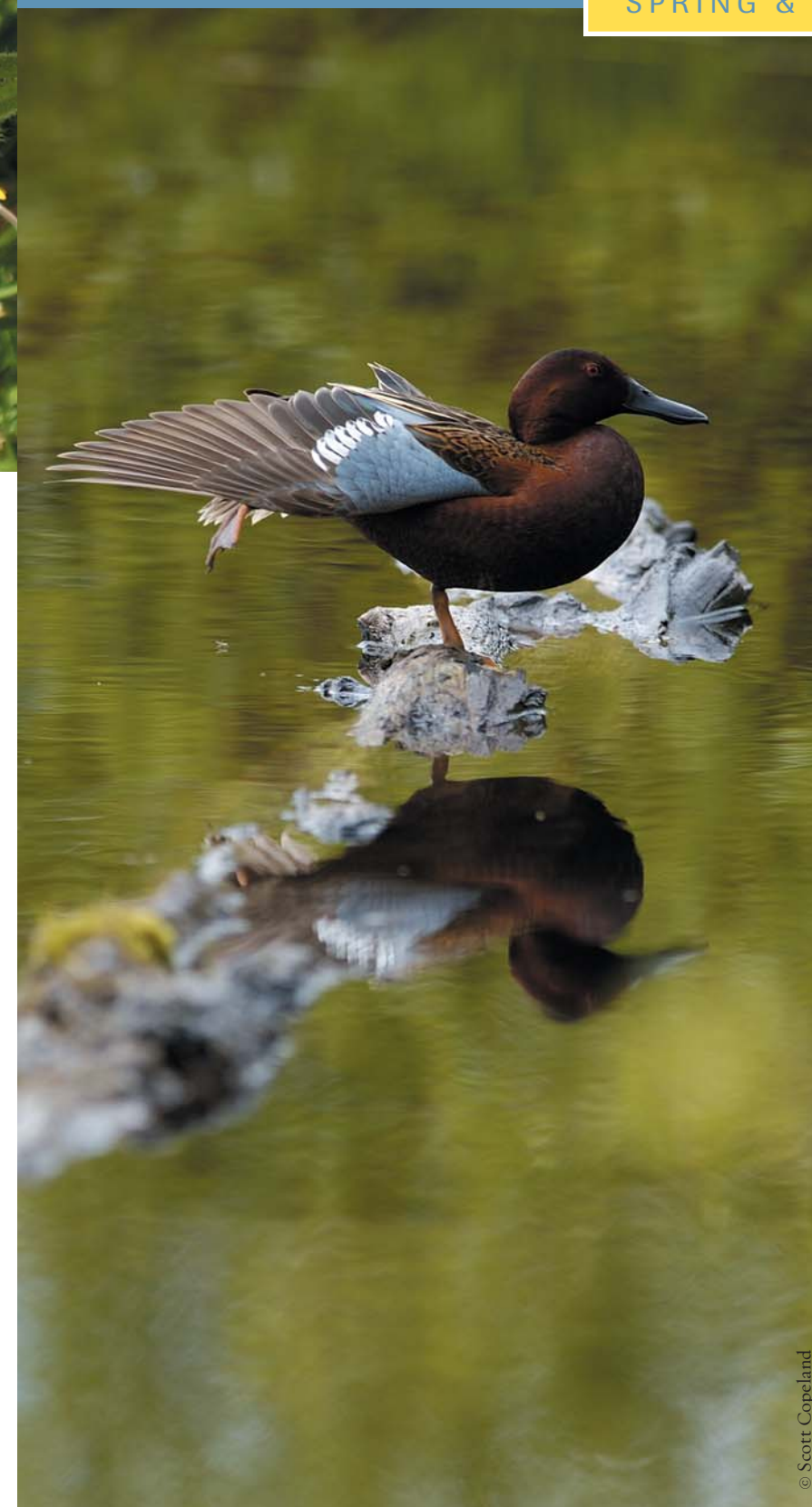
That connection between far-away places and our own backyard is what inspired Deborah Reguera of the Johnson Family Foundation to make a generous gift to the Conservancy in Wyoming's grasslands. It's a challenge match for donors who give to grasslands projects in either Wyoming or Africa, or both. You'll read about this gift inside, and how it can leverage your passion for Wyoming with other areas around the world where you can make a difference.

That's the fun thing about the Conservancy, after all. The conservation action we take at a local level has global outcomes. We make the connection.

Sincerely,

Andrea Erickson Quiroz, State Director

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SUMMER EVENTS

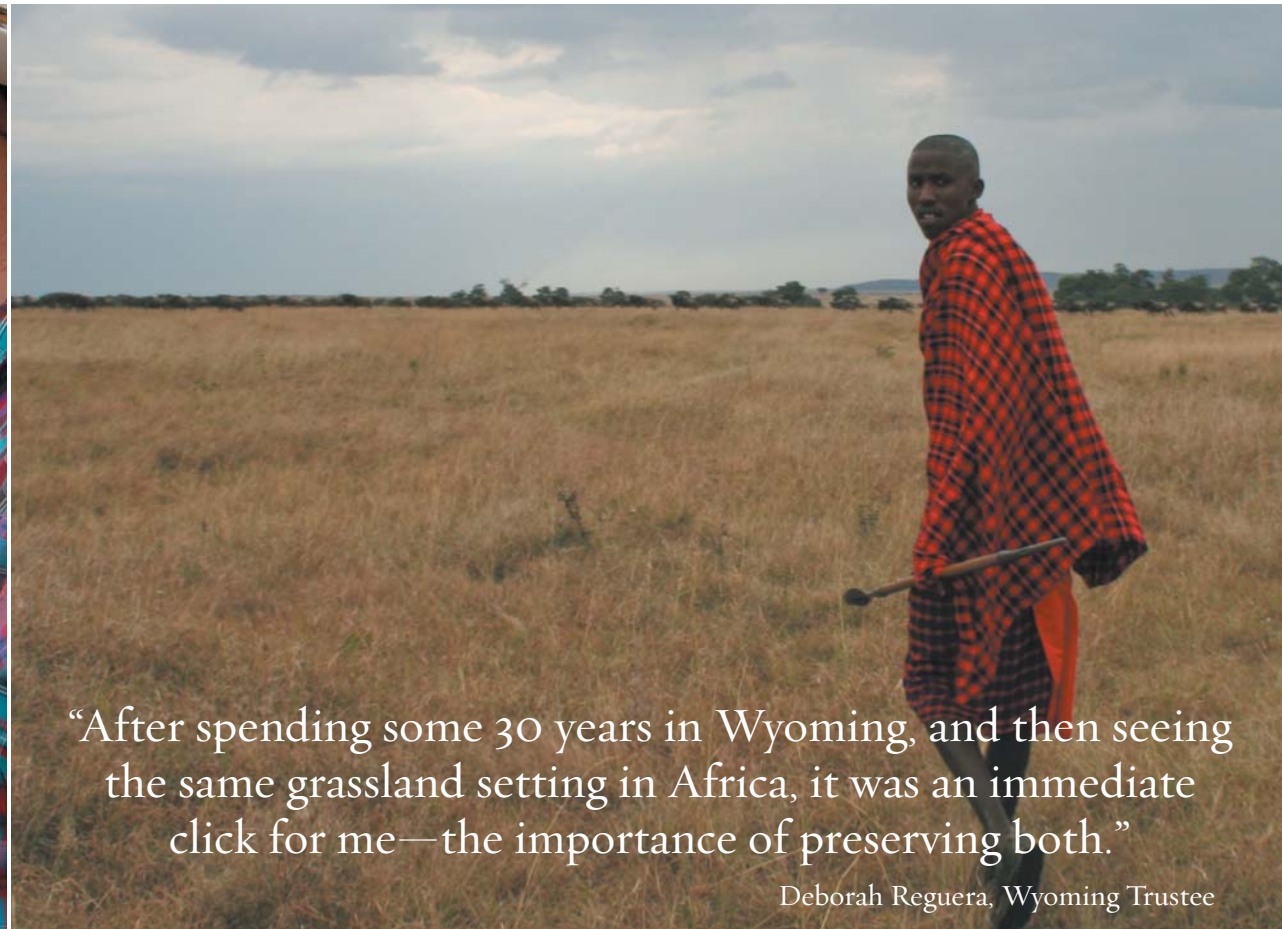
A chance to see how your investment is growing.



© Julie Cornia



Brent Lathrop (left) makes local connections with YCross Ranch Manager Manny Monserrette (right) in Wyoming's grasslands. © Kerry Brophy Lloyd/TNC



“After spending some 30 years in Wyoming, and then seeing the same grassland setting in Africa, it was an immediate click for me—the importance of preserving both.”

Deborah Reguera, Wyoming Trustee

A Maasai tribesman follows the wildebeest migration in Kenya's grasslands. © Jason Miner

Spotlight On... The Pitchfork Ranch

The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming teamed up with landowners and partner organizations to secure eleven conservation easements in 2007, protecting more than 14,000 acres of private lands from development. The final tally represents the most easements completed by the Conservancy in five years.

One of these voluntary agreements continues a long tradition of conservation on the Pitchfork Ranch. Located west of Meeteetse, the Pitchfork is one of Wyoming's oldest ranches. It reached national fame in 1981 when a local rancher discovered a population of black-footed ferrets after the species was presumed extinct.

The ranch sits in a natural east-west migration route for moose, elk, mule deer and bighorn sheep moving from Yellowstone National Park, through the Absarokas, to winter ranges in the Greybull River watershed.

Now an additional 2,540 acres of easements are added to 10,790 acres already protected on the ranch. “Conservation easements have been part of our overall plan for the ranch since we purchased it,” says ranch co-owner Greg Luce. “We wanted to have a vision for the ranch that involves a continuing ranching operation coupled with preserving open space in perpetuity.”

Wyoming's Pitchfork Ranch © Edward Orth

Staff Interview:

Brent Lathrop, Southeast Wyoming Program Director

Why is it important to conserve Wyoming's grasslands?

Grasslands are an often forgotten part of Wyoming. They cover the state's eastern third, but a lot of people just don't know they're out there. We're lucky in Wyoming—we have some of the country's last intact native grasslands—our grasses grow short but pack in a powerful amount of nutrients for birds and grazing animals like pronghorn. Many of these wide-open lands have never seen a plow or a housing development. And the people who live here have been good stewards of land, many for generations. So we have an opportunity that's been lost in many other parts of the North American Great Plains.

What's your typical day like?

What I do is community-based conservation, which means I immerse myself in the landscape and become part of the culture out here. That means I

spend a lot of my time in the pickup visiting with ranchers, conservation districts, government officials and businesses. By doing this I'm developing relationships that are going to serve conservation well into the future. It's very cost-effective in the long run because you're making connections and building on conservation efforts already underway.

What will it take to save Wyoming's grasslands?

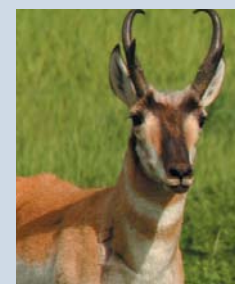
It's going to take a cultural shift in the state toward greater appreciation of our grasslands. We're going to have to recognize that grasslands are an important part of the state's big, open landscapes. Things are changing fast—residential growth and invasive weeds are knocking on the door. We're going to have to act soon and remember that Wyoming's grasslands are fragile—they don't heal fast.

“We're going to have to act soon and remember that Wyoming's grasslands are fragile—they don't heal fast.”

Brent Lathrop, Southeast Wyoming Program Director

Global Connections:

A Gift to Wyoming Grasslands Stretches All the Way to Africa



© Joe Kiesecker

Wyoming and Africa may be far apart, but they share something important: grasslands, and the time-honored way of life they support. Whether Maasai pastoralists in Kenya and Tanzania, or cowboys out on the sweeping mixed-

grass prairie of Wyoming... both are tied to a landscape quietly slipping away.

Now, thanks to a gift from the Johnson Family Foundation, conservation results can reach both Wyoming and Africa. The Johnson family gift is directed to Wyoming, matching any donations to Africa or Wyoming grasslands.

“In 2005 my family took a trip to Kenya,” says Deborah Reguera, a Wyoming trustee who has long supported the Conservancy in Wyoming with her parents, Anne and Paul Johnson. “We were sitting by the Mara River watching a big, triangular mass of wildebeest storm over these hills of grass, and I thought, ‘This is what it looked like out West when the buffalo still moved through the plains.’”

“After spending some 30 years in Wyoming, and then seeing the same grassland setting in Africa, it was an immediate click for me—the importance of preserving both.”

The Johnson family gift is an important reminder that we're connected to people and places we'll never know, says Andrea Erickson Quiroz, Wyoming's state director. “This gift will have huge implications for conservation projects in Wyoming and Africa. But it's also exciting to me because it connects the dots. We can share and apply what we learn here over there and vice versa.”

Deborah Reguera hopes her family's matching gift fuels others to support the Conservancy's global scope. “This is a rare opportunity to double your impact on conservation around the world,” she says. “And there's no better organization to do it.”



Deborah Reguera
© Scott Copeland



© Will van Overbeek



What Wyoming Wants: Statewide Poll Finds Support for Ag, Open Space

Have you seen me in your mailbox? We recently sent all our members a bulletin from the University of Wyoming with some information we thought you'd find

interesting. What's inside? Turns out voters want to preserve what makes Wyoming “Wyoming,” according to a statewide public opinion poll sponsored by The Nature Conservancy, the University of Wyoming, the Trust for Public Land, and the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. Voters expressed overwhelming support for fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, as well as keeping family farmers and ranchers on the land.

**Read the Results of the Survey at
www.nature.org/wyoming**

