

## Conservation Buyers in the Greater Yellowstone Area

A conservation buyer is a private individual, or a group of individuals, interested in protecting land with important resource values who purchases the land to achieve this goal. The buyer may purchase land and then donate or sell an easement to a land trust or government agency. The buyer realizes tax benefits from a donation. The owner may then either keep and enjoy the land, or resell the land on the open market at the reduced value resulting from the easement.

Land trusts operate “conservation buyer programs” to connect conservation buyers with properties the trusts have determined to have important resource values. Often, the land trusts’ programs simply identify properties and work with real estate agents. Some land trusts purchase the land themselves, place an easement on it, and then resell it. Land trusts are operating conservation buyer programs across the nation, and several land trusts operate conservation buyer programs in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

### Jackson Hole Land Trust

The Jackson Hole Land Trust maintains on its website a list of properties, typically 35 acres or larger, that the Trust feels have important conservation values and merit protection. To date, more than 3,200 acres have been protected through its Conservation Buyer Program.

See: [http://www.jhlandtrust.org/buy\\_prog/](http://www.jhlandtrust.org/buy_prog/)

### Green Valley and Trust

The Green Valley Land Trust maintains a list of available area properties with agricultural, wildlife and open space values that the Trust believes merit conservation attention. This trust also maintains a list of conservation-minded buyers. The Trust can also assist in completing a conservation easement.

See: <http://www.grvlandtrust.org/property/buyer/index.php>

### Teton Regional Land Trust

The Teton Regional Land Trust works with buyers and their representatives to identify properties that might be a good match. The Trust also works with landowners interested in selling their property to a buyer who will permanently protect the property from further development. The Trust has identified the following priority criteria:

- Wetlands, floodplains, and riparian habitats needed to protect water quality
- Agricultural land that provides significant open space values and maintains agricultural uses
- Wildlife
- Land adjacent to other protected properties
- Land of sufficient size that its resources will remain intact if adjacent lands are developed

See: [http://www.tetonlandtrust.org/conservation\\_how\\_it\\_works.htm](http://www.tetonlandtrust.org/conservation_how_it_works.htm)

### **The Nature Conservancy**

The Nature Conservancy buys land itself, and uses the funds from sold properties to help finance future acquisitions.

See: <http://www.nature.org/aboutus/howwework/conservationbuyer/help/art11639.html>

### **Vital Ground**

Vital ground is dedicated to protecting land in areas critical to grizzly bears, and operates a conservation buyers program to place easement designed to protect habitat resources and other natural features of the land, and then resell the land.

See: <http://www.vitalground.org/support.php?page=384.html>

### **Northern Rockies Ranches**

Northern Rocky Ranches keeps an inventory of large tracts of land and ranches for sale in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho. The site provides information about the tax benefits of buying and conserving a property. Some of the listed properties are already protected by conservation easements. The Jackson Hole Land Trust shares information with Northern Rocky Ranches.

See: <http://www.northernrockyranches.com/>