

Strengthening Partnerships Across the Landscape

Bridger-Teton National Forest STEW-MAP 2021

The Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) in western Wyoming comprises over 3.4 million acres of public land. This rich and diverse landscape borders Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and includes the headwaters of the Green, Snake, and Yellowstone Rivers. Robust and diverse partnerships are necessary to steward this landscape, yet these partnerships are not currently systematically tracked or available as a dataset.

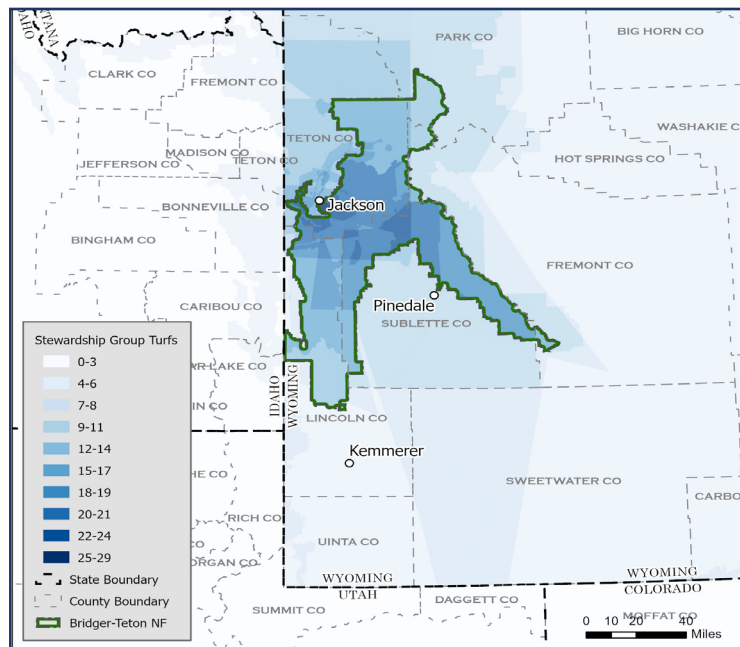
What is the STEW-MAP BTNF project?

In 2019, the Bridger-Teton Planning Team launched a Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project (STEW-MAP) with the following objectives:

- **Accelerate progress toward forest planning objectives** by identifying shared priorities and working across organizational and jurisdictional boundaries to achieve outcomes at scale.
- **Improve partnership tracking, inventory, and planning** in an environment where both staffing, funding, and partnerships are dynamic.
- **Develop a collective partnership knowledge bank** among all forest staff.
- **Improve understanding about partner organizations** and their priority interests and capacities.



Bridger-Teton National Forest , Jackson Ranger District. USDA Forest Service photo.



Geographic map of partnership groups across the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

How did we approach this collaboration?

BTNF Employee Survey—In early 2020, the Bridger-Teton team sent out an internal survey to all permanent forest employees. A survey response rate of 33.8 percent resulted in 44 responses received from employees who had a combined 510 years of experience working on the BTNF. Survey responses gathered information on partners each of these employees currently work with and who within the agency maintains these relationships. See survey results: <https://arcgis/0azejy>.

STEW-MAP Survey—In December 2020, the STEW-MAP survey was launched and initially sent to 105 organizations identified through the BTNF employee survey. The survey was also shared more broadly via known partners across the region, and these partners were encouraged to disseminate the survey to their networks. A total of 43 completed responses were received through this combined effort. To learn more, visit: <https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/STEW-MAP/bridgertetonnf/>.

What did we discover?

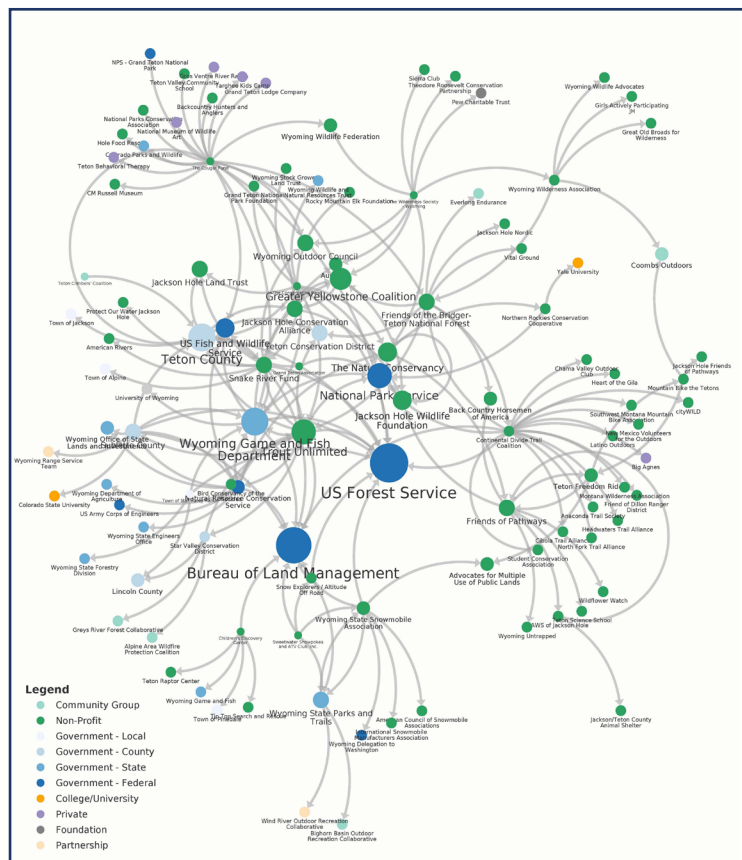
Partners are agents of change—Partnership groups in the Greater Yellowstone region work on everything from protecting native species and ecosystems, to creating safe and accessible recreational spaces compatible with wildlife. Based on the responding groups, over 478,000 people, including at least 1,350 full and part time staff members; 300,700 members; and 176,500 volunteers contribute to stewardship activities.

Many groups work on issues beyond natural resource management—Partnership opportunities emerge from many different sectors. Recreation and education are key points of engagement for over 50 percent of responding groups in the region.

Partners produce ecological knowledge—Over 67 percent of responding groups surveyed actively collect data, track metrics, and monitor the local environment.

Partners work across the landscape at all scales and across sectors for collective impact—From a single stream to the entire region, natural resource management is often accomplished by public agencies working collaboratively with partners and through partnership networks. Civic groups help connect government agencies with other government and civic partners. In the region, BTNF and federal partners are central collaborators, but some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are key connectors to other potential partners. County and state agencies are key connectors of information. Many NGOs are pivotal links to a broader funding network.

Looking Ahead: We recommend that the BTNF staff continue to identify new groups and monitor partnerships over time. STEW-MAP is currently piloting a new approach called “STEW-MAP Live” to do this. STEW-MAP Live data could be used to better understand seasonal activities and to provide annual reporting metrics. In addition, this ongoing data collection can be paired with a full STEW-MAP survey on a regular basis (e.g., 10 years intervals) to understand how partnership networks change over time.



Collaboration network for Bridger-Teton National Forest.

Learn More

Full report: Strengthening Partnerships Across the Landscape: Bridger-Teton National Forest STEW-MAP Report.

The Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project (STEW-MAP) is a research tool, community organizing approach, and partnership mapping platform. STEW-MAP provides insights that can foster civic participation, increase social cohesion, and support requests for funding and programming.

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