

From: [Luke, Tim](#)
To: [Garceau, Sarah](#)
Subject: FW: written comment on Teton County proposed Teton Creek Flood Control District
Date: Monday, January 27, 2014 12:14:31 PM

[Here it is](#)

From: Kevin Thibeault [mailto:kthibeault@tcsd.org]
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2014 3:02 PM
To: Luke, Tim
Subject: written comment on Teton County proposed Teton Creek Flood Control District

Hello Tim,

I hope I have the correct address to submit written comments on the Teton Creek Flood Control District located in Teton County.

At this time I have some concerns about the proposed district.

The high water in Teton Creek is usually only high where it erodes banks, moves trees, and rolls gravel, for only two to three weeks in the summer. Additionally, since 1992 when I purchased ground that had irrigation rights associated with high water on Teton Creek, there have been four years where the water was high enough to move trees, gravel deposits, and remove banks. The other years there is high water but it is clear and manageable very early on in the irrigation year. In those 4 years where the high water was enough to erode areas, those of us who manage the water by head gates opened up our head gates (water comes off of Teton Creek) to help alleviate the high water. I know our irrigation ditches cannot handle enough volume to mitigate all the erosion high water causes, but it did help in several ways. One was to lessen the effect of erosion, but perhaps this was not the most important thing opening them up does.

By opening up our head gates during violent high water years, and even in the early irrigation season, we fill or replenish the aquifer called Buffalo Springs. Years where we have enough water to fill up the Buffalo Springs aquifer our springs will run into November. What is important to know is those springs eventually run into the Teton River, which helps many user groups, the most vocal are the fishing and downstream irrigators. In years where there is not enough high water to fill Buffalo Springs aquifer the springs quit running by the end of July or August, and the level of Teton River drops dramatically after the high water runs out. Buffalo Springs act as a big detention pond which supports the Teton River from August through November. Buffalo Springs Aquifer also allows us to hold water in years where the run off is violent enough to erode banks and trees, by opening our irrigation head gates we lessen the effects of erosion.

As irrigators we meet when needed to clean Teton Creek after a violent high water year. I own a backhoe and several of the others who use water off of Teton Creek go with me to remove debris. We have the water master go with us so we are not effecting other areas we do not know about.

We have been able to maintain the creek where we need to without the formation of a Flood Control District. Those areas where homes have been built in the high water zones should be able

to take care of their portion of the creek without inflicting additional taxes on other users. The proposal is not clear as to the added bureaucracy irrigation users will face when dealing with our ditches if the district is formed. What also is not clear is the ability of the district to assume other properties, up and down stream, into the district. I do not think the 18K raised from taxes will go very far if the district becomes operational, and the district will need to add more properties to gather more funds. I kind of feel like it will be a never ending tax burden and there will never be enough money to keep the creek where people want it to go.

I wish I could better explain and have people see the effects that a full Buffalo Springs aquifer has on late summer/fall water levels of Teton River and the springs associated with Buffalo Springs. I worry that the new Flood Control District leadership will not be able to see, or have the time to see our need to keep Buffalo Springs as full as possible. I worry that their bureaucracy will force high water down the creek during a time when it needs to be diverted into the holding tank of Buffalo Springs, and not shut down the creek where in their minds it will not damage any property. In years where Buffalo Springs aquifer is full from the high water of Teton Creek, Teton River is the eventual benefactor by have more water supplied to it by the springs, all the way through October and November.

Thank you for allowing the comment period and taking the time to read mine,

Sincerely,

Kevin Thibeault

770 South Bates Road

Driggs, ID 83422

208-354-8922 hm