**What do you see as the most significant impacts of human caused climate change on Jackson Hole?**

*Arne Jorgensen, Candidate for Town Council*

Out of a long list of possible impacts; I would highlight four, more frequent extreme weather events, increased wildland fire risk, reduced snow level, and increased costs on our more vulnerable residents.

*Jonathan Schechter, Candidate for Town Council*

The region’s ecosystem has evolved in response to long, hard, cold winters.  Global warming puts at great and increasing risk all of the ecosystem’s essential qualities and functions.

Locally, the details of what we can anticipate are spelled out in the publication “The Coming Climate,” which I envisioned, contributed to, edited and published in 2015.

<https://charture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-coming-climate-sept-2015.pdf>

Global warming has been a concern of mine since 1980, when I helped design and teach the first course Stanford University ever offered on climate change.  Sadly, tragically, despite the efforts of so many, the planet continues to warm at increasingly alarming rates.

*Devon Viehman, Candidate for Town Council*

Water and unpredictable, extreme weather are at the heart of climate change’s impacts and we see its effects in Jackson Hole manifest as feast or famine snowfall patterns, accompanied by faster thaws and spring temperatures that warm more rapidly than before. This results in heavier snow melt run-offs that do not last long enough into the summers causing our region to get drier and drier. We can physically see it with Jackson Lake both last year and this year, and we see it with our region’s extreme wildland fires that result in devastation to our flora and fauna and serious health risks with dangerous Air Quality Indices.

Locally, car and plane travel are our biggest emitters of greenhouse gasses which is all the more reason we need to invest in START and other multimodal forms of transportation and house our local workforce to help mitigate commutes. Focusing on these areas would not only be a win for our environment, it’d be a win for the heavy traffic that all of us hate.

*Wes Gardner, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

As more people experience the dangers of climate change, wealthy buyers have looked to the mountains for escape.  The consequent real estate boom has caused housing prices to skyrocket, and rental prices have more than followed suit.  Not only have dozens of homes, which historically supplied market-based affordable workforce housing, been transformed into often-empty second homes, but as the inventory of affordable beds has shrunk, tenants have seen rents increase dramatically.  This has caused many in our community to move down the road, and has forced many to simply move away.

Otherwise, increasing temperatures are impacting the health of our fish, sustained droughts are fueling more contentious water rights issues downstream, and wildfire remains a constant threat in the forests that surround us.

*Kasey Mateosky, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Water quality and lack of water is a huge concern. Steady warming, snowpack decreasing and temperatures and evaporation increasing, future conditions are expected to be drier, stressing vegetation and increasing the risk of wildfires. Inclement weather is more common. It has been hotter and windier than ever before. Cutting greenhouse gas emissions is a must or this cycle will continue to worsen. The rise in temperature allows for insects like the bark beetle to wreak havoc year round. Loss of forest and dying trees hurt two fold, by not helping to reduce carbon emissions.

*Mark Newcomb, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

The most significant impacts of human caused climate changed are widespread ranging from impacts on the ecosystem to direct economic impacts.

Impacts to the ecosystem most significantly include increasing probability of longer, hotter, drier fire seasons that have a commensurate increase in probability of bigger, hotter, faster moving wild fires that both impact the ecosystem and threaten human structures, especially in the Wildland urban interface. Infestations such as pine bark beetles will likely increase. Ungulate migration patterns may change; water temperatures in lakes, rivers and streams may increase stressing native fish species and reducing angling opportunities; flora will bloom earlier and invasive species (for example cheat grass) are more likely to flourish.

Impacts to the economy could include reduced tourism due to wildfires and warmer, shorter winters with more rain events. However ironically Teton County could see increased visitation and increased demand to live here because, as a high, alpine valley our climate remains cooler relative to many other resorts and tourist destinations. As National Parks elsewhere, especially in the Southwest, become too hot to visit, visitors may increasingly focus on Yellowstone and the Tetons with attractive cold water lakes, rivers and streams. As well, people who can afford to move or can work from home will increasingly look to higher, colder mountain communities as alternatives to areas prone to become hotter and drier or in some cases (hurricane prone areas) catastrophically wetter. This migration of well-to-do will further exacerbate growth related issues in Teton County, especially housing, but also causing more direct emissions from the new population of wealthier people who can afford larger homes, bigger cars, drive more, etc.

*Luther Propst, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

As reported in many scientific studies, evidence of anthropogenic climate change is indisputable. The impacts are and will be significant, affecting a broad range of ecological and social conditions. Climate analysis also highlights the complexity associated with anticipating and mitigating the impacts of climate change. As I consider the implications of climate change in Teton County, Wyoming, I organize my thinking with two interrelated categories: biophysical and socioeconomic.

On the biophysical side, I recently read Steve Fuller’s observations as a long-time winter keeper in Yellowstone National Park: *“warmer winters and fewer extended deep-freeze conditions, wetlands shrinking in their outlines, whitebark pine in the high country turning to ghost trees, longer fire seasons and warmth and dryness lasting longer*” (quoted in Todd Wilkinson, *Ripple Effects: How to Save Yellowstone and America’s Most Iconic Wildlife Ecosystem*, p 215).

These observations apply in Jackson Hole. Other studies (and direct observations) point to:

* earlier spring run-off,
* warmer water temperatures in the Snake River and its tributaries,
* higher likelihood of rain-on-snow events and resulting floods,
* disruptions to wildlife habitat and migration patterns as ungulates encounter more difficulty “surfing the green wave” of spring vegetation and other less charismatic species, such as song birds and amphibians, face similar disruption.

Like the rest of the world, climate change promises to deliver more extreme weather and weather-related events to Greater Yellowstone Area and the Tetons. Perhaps the most significant from the perspective of immediate human impact is wildfire seasons that are longer, with more and longer burning wildfires, and more intense and unpredictable fire behavior.

On the socioeconomic side, the impacts are perhaps equally diverse and interconnected. For example, more wildfires throughout the West are likely to result in more days with severely compromised air quality and the resulting impacts on public health.

Changes in snow and ski conditions to the south (e.g. Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Tahoe) could result in more winter visitation.

In combination with other factors (e.g. state and federal tax policy), negative climate impacts in other parts of the country (e.g. warmer summer temperatures, increasing wildfires, coastal and riverine flooding) may well continue to increase the demand for and price of luxury homes in Teton County for retirement living, second/third/fourth home ownership, and remote work.

*Tom Segerstrom, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

If we simply limit the scope of this question to how climate change will impact human activity and human preferences the most significant impacts will be wildfires, shifts in snowfall patterns, elevated water temperatures, and dramatic weather events. That said, climate change will significantly impact the biotic and abiotic systems of Teton County with deep complexity and uncertain ecological outcomes. These impacts are too numerous to summarize in this questionnaire.

*Ryan Sedgeley, Candidate for House District 23:*

Transportation, construction, and heating.

Transportation is a major source of greenhouse gases that Jackson Hole and the broader region are responsible for. These emissions come from cars and RV’s as well as air travel. I fully support mass transit solutions for Jackson Hole and the region. The answer is not electric cars alone, rather the answer is to adapt and build our cities to not need cars and then use electric vehicles where they are necessary. I am sad that Teton County invested so much money into our airport. They should have shut it down and shown a real commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Construction is another major source of greenhouse gases. Concrete, glass, and steel are all high embodied energy products and building takes a lot of those materials. I support a building code that encourages or requires use of low embodied energy building materials. I would also encourage a building code and development policies that encourage density, living roofs, and heat mitigation requirements as well as PV panels, heat pumps, and solar water heating be installed on any new construction.

Heating is a third major source of greenhouse gas emissions in our area. The use of fossil fuels to heat our homes in the cold weather is something that we need to address. The technology exists to drastically reduce the energy used to heat (and cool) our buildings. Heat pumps, insulation and leak sealing our buildings could go a long way to reducing these emissions. In addition to retrofitting old buildings, new buildings should be encouraged or required to use passive solar design, be heated and cooled with electric or solar appliances such as heat pumps, and use of special coatings and vegetation should be used to reduce the need to heat and cool.

*Liz Storer*, *Candidate for House District 23*

Jackson Hole and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is experiencing several impacts of human caused climate change that are the result of more fires, drought and floods. These include:

* Warmer and dryer winters
* Warmer and dryer summers
* Lower water levels in reservoirs, rivers and lakes with higher temperatures, affecting fish and other aquatic species
* Longer, more active and more intense fire seasons
* Poorer air quality due to smoke from wildfires in neighboring and Pacific coast states
* Floods due to intense weather events such as the one in mid-June that hit northern Yellowstone
* Influx of new visitors who previously recreated in other states that are now experiencing drought, poor snow years, wildfires, water shortages, higher temperatures
* Influx of residents from other areas across the country who are seeking a more favorable climate and environment

**Do you support government action to address climate change? If so, what actions do you support? If not, why?**

*Arne Jorgensen, Candidate for Town Council*

Of course. This being said, I am cognizant that there are three main drivers behind this question 1) actions that will have direct impact on turning back the rate of climate change at a global level, 2) actions that will address and reduce local effects of climate change - greater community resilience, and 3) actions that show leadership in a wider community that has a platform and can afford to invest in action. I am most focused on the latter two drivers.

Local Effects actions include:

* Local governments should continue investing in basic infrastructure of stormwater, water systems, and wastewater treatment to increase capacity and resiliency.
* Increasing the levels of community wildland fire awareness.
* Continue to invest in the capabilities of Jackson Hole Fire/EMS.

Leadership actions include:

* Implement community solar opportunities building on the current pilot program allowing our residents and businesses access to investments in solar photovoltaic systems.
* Increase purchases of electric vehicles in our public fleets.
* Creating publicly accessible dashboards that track our energy use and reduction efforts.

*Jonathan Schechter, Candidate for Town Council*

The stark realities of global warming make it clear that we cannot rely on industry alone to address the issue – government action is vital.

To have a meaningful effect, the most significant actions have to be taken at a national level, ideally by nations synchronizing their efforts.  In a perfect world, there would be a carbon tax.  Unfortunately, the political will for such a tax is not there.  Biden’s current proposal (which the Senate is scheduled to vote upon tomorrow) is a big step in the right direction.  Unfortunately, while it’s the best we’ve ever done, it’s not enough.

Locally, we need to continue taking actions while acknowledging two major constraints – one relating to building-related energy use, and the other to transportation:

1.    Because LVE belongs to the BPA, our electricity is among the nation's cheapest and least-carbon intensive.  We also levy relatively few taxes.

a.    Combine these two, and we have far fewer local incentives to move people to tools like rooftop solar than a place like Berkeley CA (which has high electricity costs, a lot of tax-related levers to pull, and more carbon-intensive electricity than ours).

2.    Because we have so few people who need to travel over such a large area, a wildly disproportionate amount of local carbon emissions come from transportation (my 1% for the Tetons effort helped envision and fund the community’s initial greenhouse gas emissions study).

a.    While we are expanding START service and will continue to do so, the simple reality is that these efforts are limited by our geography and low population density.

*Devon Viehman, Candidate for Town Council*

We all have an obligation to address climate, no one sector or group can go at it alone. Our government makes policies and investments, for example, with land use regulations and building codes, and in affordable housing and transportation. Government must take practical and bold action to address a multitude of issues at once. Fast-tracking affordable housing in town so fewer people need to commute long distances to work is a necessary solution. Expanding START bus routes and completing the bike pathways system is integral too. Partnership is essential and working with the county to address our wastewater issues is overdue. Sewage overflows not only pollute our fresh water systems, they also contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

As a part of the mountain town collective, MT2030 Solutions Project, we have and will continue to acquire new resources, ideas, and guides from partnering mountain towns to help us navigate different issues and determine which protocols make the most sense for our community.

The forthcoming Climate Action Roadmap for Teton County will be another tool to determine which actionable steps can be taken right away and which might be more complex to implement.

*Wes Gardner, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Absolutely.  When it comes to the issue of climate change, I see a lot of people who want to be a part of the solution, but who are stuck being part of the problem.  Good governance provides the best path to changing that

If we are going to reduce the footprint of Teton County, our attention must focus on reducing the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs) by our residents, our commuters, and our visitors.  Recent studies have shown that nearly 80% of our community's greenhouse gas emissions result from folks in cars.

*Kasey Mateosky, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Yes. There are many great plans and programs in the works. Some executive actions mainly appear to provide more funding to or otherwise strengthen these existing programs.

I also believe the work being done by the Teton County Comp Plan so far in reducing carbon emissions has been very good. I look forward to reviewing the first draft of the Climate Action Roadmap in late August to continue to address and raise awareness towards a more sustainable community and becoming a more carbon neutral County.

*Mark Newcomb, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Yes, I support government action. One of the most important actions we can take is planning and zoning so that as much of the new housing built in the county is built near services and transit eliminating as much as possible the need for the residents of those new houses to drive. Zoning in town already allows for significant amounts of new housing, and thoughtful planning and zoning of Northern South Park could also provide substantial opportunities for the right housing the right location, dramatically reducing vehicle miles traveled per capita. On a more subtle front, whenever the county rezones parts of the county we should reduce building dimensions. When we rezoned the area east of 390 I pushed for a reduction in max building heights but unfortunately lost due to lack of support from other commissioners. I made a similar effort when we rezoned Hog Island but lost again for the same reason. The county should also electrify our vehicle fleet. We’re starting to do so, but procurement has been challenging. And we need to increase EV charging infrastructure. START is doing a pretty good job with the help of federal grants, and we need to keep that momentum going. Finally, new housing subsidized with public dollars should be built to the most energy efficient standards within reason and without fossil fuel based items like gas ranges. The more we build efficiently, the more costs for energy efficient technologies and techniques will come down. Northern South Park is our biggest upcoming opportunity to do so. I’ve done extensive research on construction and HVAC technologies (passive solar, thermal envelopes and heat pumps) that could dramatically decrease energy consumption and hope to bring those ideas into discussions around new development in Northern South park.

*Luther Propst, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Yes.

I support a full range of local, state, and federal action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In the interest of space, I will focus my response to the two most promising short-term opportunities for progress.

At the federal level, I strongly support the climate change provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (aka “Build Back Manchin”), which presents an extraordinary opportunity for federal climate funding and action. The Senate bill is not perfect, of course, but it is an opportunity to reverse course.

At the county level, I want to focus attention on the most important short-term opportunity to make a significant difference: two measures on the November 2022 SPET ballot. The first is $5 million for Energy Conservation Works Projects and the second is $15 million for Multimodal Transportation Projects. Both of these measures will leverage significant federal funds and advance Teton County toward a more climate friendly future.

More generally, in anticipating the inevitable surprises that come with climate change, it is essential for local government to be responsive and adaptive to emerging priorities. This suggests the need to broadly recognize the seriousness of the climate crisis, be responsible stewards of our ecosystem and community, and show leadership in how a mountain town can respond.

*Tom Segerstrom, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Our air is considered a “shared commons” necessary for the well-being of all. Therefore climate change caused by human activity is an appropriate arena for government involvement. Teton County’s on-going support for energy conservation, composting, conservation incentive programs, appropriate development, building codes and promotion of renewable energy sources should be continued under the existing joint powers boards, public/private partnerships and other County department initiatives.

*Ryan Sedgeley, Candidate for House District 23:*

YES! Absolutely.

We must take radical action on climate change now. We are fighting for our and our children lives. This is an existential issue and we have no time to waste. Individuals and “the free market” has shown us for decades now, they will not make the changes needed fast enough for it to matter. Worse is that many corporations and wealthy individuals have used “the market” as an excuse to greenwash performatory measures or to obfuscate the issues and solutions. So government is the only choice for getting this work done.

That said, the government at various levels can do things that are both encouragements/incentives and requirements and penalties. The carrot and the stick. At the Wyoming state level, we could end all subsidies and tax benefits for coal and other fossil fuel extraction and use as a fuel. We could eliminate or threaten utility monopolies that do not comply with ending fossil fuel production and work to build out a new grid, clean power production facilities, and storage capacity. I think we should democratize power production as part of re-electifying Wyoming with renewable power. Solar panels on every roof, organize power production locally in coops and have a grid managing agency or limited corporation to control the flow and export of power out of state.

I think that the state government could also work to improve and shift our transportation priorities. Focusing on rail, mass transit, and finally electric cars and trucks where needed. We could move ourselves away from cars and the very expensive requirements of building and maintaining roads. The state could also encourage carbon neutral steel and concrete factories and encourage this industry to grow and develop here in Wyoming. I think hydrogen is likely part of this solution, but it is only a part of it, not the sole solution.

I would also support government investigating and prosecuting corporate executives and lawyers who have participated in the intentional disinformation campaign to cast doubt on climate change and to obstruct efforts to combat it. Along this line, I think eliminating any corporate liability protection for individuals would be helpful, so that anyone who is perpetrating these kinds of crimes can be help liable both as a agent of the corporation and individually as well. Raise the stakes, change the incentives, and make it extremely costly and dangerous to do the wrong thing.

Finally, the state could subsidize energy efficiency efforts at retrofitting homes and other buildings around the state. This is needed to help people who cannot afford to do this themselves. Wyoming has a lot of people who are poor and struggling. We should do this as a climate justice and equity project.

*Liz Storer*, *Candidate for House District 23*

I support local, state and federal action to address climate change.

Local:

* SPET items to fund Energy Conservation Works projects and Multimodal Transportation projects. Additional efforts to make Jackson a carbon-neutral community

State:

* Increase revenues for conservation and protecting wildlife on state trust lands
* Create better transportation options to reduce automobile traffic and carbon emissions
* Update regulations and implement state and local financing programs to assist

homeowners in upgrading septic systems as their impact increases with growth and climate change

Federal:

* I support the Inflation Reduction Act and other efforts to curb greenhouse gasses and keep the US moving forward in reducing our carbon footprint.
* I believe the federal government should provide debt relief for electric cooperatives to incentivize the transition to non-fossil fuel energy as sources for their customers across rural America

**What carbon reduction strategies do you see as highest priority, and what steps will you take if elected to implement them?**

*Arne Jorgensen, Candidate for Town Council*

There are two areas of priority 1) A strong focus on transportation given that these represent the majority of locally impacts and 2) Reviewing changes to our Land Development Regulations and Building Code requirements.

Transportation:

* Depending on access to appropriate funding, we should build on the current increases in levels of START service including a transition to fare free service.
* Working with the State Legislature to permit the creation of High Occupancy Vehicle/Transit Priority lanes.
* Creating mechanisms for full mitigation of carbon footprint impacts of both commercial and private airplanes using the Jackson Hole Airport.

 Land Development Regulations and Building Code:

* Continue to use updated Energy Codes as part of our Building Code package.
* Create an Energy Mitigation Program for the Town of Jackson that would build on the program currently in place in the County.
* Require electric vehicle charging infrastructure in new construction.
* Explore incentives that reward projects with reduced levels of energy use.

*Jonathan Schechter, Candidate for Town Council*

We must be clear-eyed in acknowledging that, regardless of what Jackson Hole does or does not do, we cannot have a meaningful effect on the planet’s overall carbon emissions.  That noted, we need to do all we can – not just in our actions, but the in the model and message we provide for our visitors.  This is especially important given the threat global warming poses to the Comp Plan’s vision of preserving and protecting our area’s ecosystem.

Given the previously mentioned facts that our electricity is relatively low-emission, and that such a disproportionately high share of our overall emissions come from transportation, the most efficacious step we can take is to support START’s board in its efforts to expand the transit system and its use.  If re-elected, the most efficacious step I can to toward that end is to continue doing what I have been doing – working closely with the START board and staff to grow START, and with local and state transit agencies (e.g., WYDoT and local public works folks) to improve not just our transit system, but the depth and breadth of our non-motorized transportation options.

Beyond that, I hope to serve another four years as the town council’s liaison to ECW, and in so doing help that agency expand its efforts to conserve residential and commercial energy use.

*Devon Viehman, Candidate for Town Council*

Addressing affordable and workforce housing is my highest priority. Immediate zoning regulation changes must happen. Local zoning, regulation and permitting processes have become so cumbersome that no one can build affordable housing units without losing money. That is why more luxury townhomes and hotels continue to be built: no one can build anything different and turn a profit. If we immediately address the red tape and reassess our current policies, we will see faster change, keep more of our community members in our community, and see fewer people commuting long distances to get to work. Smart-growth is good for the community, climate, economy. Our housing emergency affects our economy, the environment, and mental health. It’s all interconnected, and it must be our highest priority.

*Wes Gardner, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

As a member of the START board, reducing VMTs is always front of mind.  As we emerge from COVID, riders will find some changes at START starting with more frequent and reliable service.  Many will find that opportunities to engage with the transit system exist from their own driveway (START On-Demand).  There is a long way to go- particularly when it comes to commuter service- but there is a lot to be proud of at START right now.  Continuing this trajectory will take sustained commitment and support from our representatives.  If chosen to be your County Commissioner, I will work my ass off to reduce VMTs in and around our valley.

*Kasey Mateosky, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Conserve energy through waste management and water conservation.
Positive actions are being taken by Teton County in cutting greenhouse gas emissions through energy conservation, improved efficiency, renewable energy, public transit. I support things like adopting the ICC building codes requiring greater insulation values in new construction, water saving fixtures and high thermal efficient doors and windows, installing solar panels on it’s buildings, electric Transit system (START), electric cars and bikes for staff, and connecting a user friendly pathway system for walking and biking. I'd like to see the efforts continue in striving to become carbon neutral. I believe educating, encouraging, incentivizing and executing the plan will help get all the individuals of this community on board for a better outcome for our town, County, State and Country.

*Mark Newcomb, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

I think I’ve answer this above: planning and zoning appropriately to ensure any new housing has as small a carbon footprint as possible. This includes location to reduce or eliminate the need for single occupancy vehicle travel and utilizing building standards to reduce per-capita transportation carbon footprint and housing-related (building size/heating/cooling/cooking/etc) carbon footprint. EV charging infrastructure needs to be built out. Energy mitigation fees should remain in place and be reviewed as ways to further incentivize reductions in fossil fuel consumption related to new construction. All new county buildings should be constructed to the highest standards for energy efficiency.

*Luther Propst, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

The two local strategies that seem very achievable are:

* Increase the percentage of our year-round electricity supply that comes from clean, fossil-free sources – with special emphasis on meeting winter electricity demand (when the value of solar is lower) and lowering peak energy demand. At the top of the list is to generate more clean, renewable energy throughout the grid, including solar and wind energy as well as energy sources with higher winter value, such as hydroelectric, geothermal, pumped storage hydropower, and advances in energy storage. Also high on the list is to invest in improving the energy efficiency of buildings, which reduces demand for electricity in the winter.
* Reduce the carbon footprint of our local transportation system, including improving commuter bus service and continuing to press for conversion to electric buses. We need to increase the daily number of commuter bus runs from four to more like 20. We need to take a suite of measures to make it more convenient and economical to ride the bus than to drive a single occupancy vehicle fueled by an internal combustion engine. We also need to increase the convenience and viability of electric vehicles by adding more superchargers in the region.

*Tom Segerstrom, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

The most significant role Teton County plays in global climate change is that we currently represent a large carbon “sink” that is naturally absorbing and sequestering volumes of carbon and producing oxygen. Maintaining landscape-scale, complex and intact native vegetation communities and agriculture should be our number one obligation. Actions that degrade our wild landscapes and viable agriculture should be minimized and/or mitigated using zoning, building codes, improved natural resource protection regulations and conservation incentives. I would also advocate for repeating the countywide vegetation mapping to understand the effects of our current development patterns.

Secondarily our past air emission inventories, while imperfect, should be repeated in order to measure emission reduction successes and prioritize new actions. We should expand on our past successes such as the achievements of the Energy Conservation Works with Lower Valley Energy and Government featuring the expansion of Green Power investments, private energy audits and subsequent energy conservation upgrades. Teton County is also well positioned for electric vehicles due to Yellowstone-Teton Clean Cities initiatives with vehicle charging stations. The creation of residential and commercial food and wood waste composting programs by Teton County’s Integrated Solid Waste and Recycling with the private sector have been strategic and exemplary. Finally, the pending actions and achievable, coordinated, carbon reduction goals being developed by the Climate Action Collective are welcomed.

*Ryan Sedgeley, Candidate for House District 23:*

End the mining and burning of coal immediately. I would work to eliminate all subsidies and laws that favor coal production and burning. I would pair this with a just transition package that would pay displaced workers their full wages and benefits while they are retrained, through our amazing network of community colleges and union training programs, to work on re-electrifying Wyoming with renewable energy.

We should also end any new leasing for oil and gas production and buy back or cancel existing leases. Again, fossil fuel production and consumption must come to an end. Oil and gas production is slightly more nuanced because of the non-fuel products that are created from petroleum are still going to be needed in the short and medium term. That said, the existing ~9000 permitted oil and gas wells that are ready to be developed should be sufficient. Ending new leasing will just stop the reckless financial speculation and stockpiling of leases.

I also support building out a national power grid utilizing wind, solar, and various types of energy storage. The research has been done and we could power our country via inexpensive PV and wind power if we build out capacity and connect it all via a nationwide grid. This is not a technological issue, it is a political one. I would do all I could to move us in this direction. It must be said here, that siting will be important. We need to respect sensitive cultural sites, sensitive wildlife habitat and migration corridors, and not force poor people to bear the burden of this in the process.

Finally, we should build out a rail mass transit system and restructure our towns and cities to not need cars. As mentioned above we need to move away from cars and quickly. We could re-tool cities and towns to not need cars. Smaller towns could close streets to vehicle traffic, plant trees, create parks and encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Encourage people to live closer to town encouraging density. We have the model for this and it works not only to reduce emissions but to improve the quality of life too! Rail mass transit is a very expensive project and will need significant state and federal funding, but we can shift highway funds towards rail and mass transit along with raising new taxes. People love trains, Wyoming is no exception. Roads that connect rural people need to be maintained and routes should be thoughtfully planned out to minimize the need to drive cars and trucks.

*Liz Storer*, *Candidate for House District 23*

* Developing more clean, renewable energy sources, incentivizing increased use of clean renewable energy
* State funding of wind and solar energy projects
* Increasing funding to START so that we can increase and improve commuter bus service Increase funding to add electric vehicle superchargers across Teton County, in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, and across the state to help incentivize electric vehicles
* Tax incentives for research on batteries to make the transition to renewables more practicable
* Reducing Wyoming’s production and reliance on fossil fuel for its economy and as its primary revenue source

**What funding sources do you support for carbon reduction priorities?**

*Arne Jorgensen, Candidate for Town Council*

The Town of Jackson faces significant budgetary challenges, over time, our expenses are increasing faster than our revenues. The vast majority of our budget is invested in the provision of the community's basic Core Services and there is not a significant amount of funding available within our current budgets.

There are generally four areas of local funding, listed by priority: mitigation programs, sales tax such as SPET, leveraging efforts such as bonding, and property tax depending statewide changes.

*Jonathan Schechter, Candidate for Town Council*

As noted above, Ideally we would have a federal carbon tax.  That would be the fastest, most efficient way to conserve energy and in so doing reduce emissions.  A cap-and-trade system would also be worthwhile, but of course we have no local ability to implement either.

Closer to home, two simple realities shape any effort local government might take.

First, Jackson Hole is a 21st century community with a 20th century operating system.  The way we fund government is increasingly disconnected from our economy, making it increasingly difficult to find the money we need to address the community’s ever-growing, increasingly complex challenges.  If re-elected, I will continue my efforts trying to get the legislature to approve new funding mechanisms better aligned with our 21st century economy (e.g., a real estate transfer tax).

Second, local government has neither the time nor expertise to come up with new ideas for funding carbon reduction (or other necessary conservation steps, for that matter).  What we can and must do is look to others in the community – be they the START board, advocacy organizations such as the Climate Action Collective for suggestions about both new policies and new funding mechanisms, or others whose passion and expertise is needed to help tackle our thorniest challenges.

As a result, my hope is that the CAC and others will come to us with suggestions for funding sources.  This will be the fastest, most effective way to deal with the challenge.

*Devon Viehman, Candidate for Town Council*

The Council recently contracted with a consulting firm that specializes in accessing federal and state funding and grants. It was well overdue. Money was being left on the table. There are so many climate-linked grants that span sectors from green, affordable housing construction to transportation. The dollars are there, and we need to keep looking for creative ways to get to it.

*Wes Gardner, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Great question.  I applaud the Town and County for their recent commitments, funding and hiring positions fully committed to sustainability and climate change.  These positions are funded out of the General Funds, an appropriate source for these positions.  For now.  If we want to grow our community into a "City on the Hill" (of Mayflower fame), where we commit to and attain zero-emissions as soon as possible, it would be nice to find a more sustainable source.  If Cheyenne were to allow for the passage of a Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT), I would support a structure diverting some revenue to supporting a Sustainability Department for the community.  With nearly $3B in real estate sales in 2021, Teton County could have easily generated $30M with a conservative (1%) rate.

*Kasey Mateosky, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Federal and State Grants like the new Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) passed in April. A program that provides states and local agencies in both urban and rural areas funding needed to reduce emissions and build a more sustainable transportation network.
EPA’s (Environmental Protection Agency) research focusing on a few important aspects of how climate change affects air, water, the environment and human health.

*Mark Newcomb, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

We need a mix of local tax revenue, some of which could come from the specific purpose excise tax, some of which could come from general revenues. Energy mitigation fees should remain in place. Federal grant funding should be aggressively pursued. And the commitment of the Community to address climate change could provide some philanthropic support to match government efforts through public private partnerships.

*Luther Propst, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Addressing the climate crisis requires a full range of funding sources – local, state, federal, and philanthropic, as well as private investment. My immediate priority is to pass the two SPET measures discussed above, which will lead to significant leverage of federal funds.

*Tom Segerstrom, Candidate for Board of County Commissioners*

Funding for the Energy Conservation Works (a Joint Powers Board) has been an effective conduit for action. Similarly, funding Integrated Solid Waste and Recycling and “enterprise” efforts to sequester carbon have been successful. Partnerships with the private sector and Teton Conservation District regarding native vegetation, restorative agriculture, and energy conservation is a logical sharing of current taxpayer funds.

Infrastructure improvements are appropriate for Special Purpose Excise Taxes, and perhaps Travel and Tourism Board appropriations. From the private sector, perhaps habitat loss mitigations should also include carbon sequestration components to offset development carbon emissions over time.

*Ryan Sedgeley, Candidate for House District 23:*

The simple answer is any and all funding sources.

I would support new taxes on the rich. Taxing the billionaires would provide much of the needed funding and would have a secondary benefit of eliminating some of the corrosive and damaging effects of having billionaires in our society. Along with taxes on the rich, I would encourage taxes on carbon emissions, fossil fuels, dirty industries, and an estate tax. I would work to close the blind trust and serial LLC laws we have in Wyoming and force the tax dodgers to pay up.

Longer term, we are going to need to generate sustainable revenue. For this I propose implementing new progressive taxes on income, capital gains, property transfers, and energy production. As new industries emerge we would need to look at how to generate revenue in a way that was both fair and sustainable.

Realistically, Wyoming is going to continue to need federal funding to stay afloat and this is something I am happy to embrace. We have a very small population for the land size of our state and federal funding will be needed to make much of these changes possible.

No matter what the funding source is, it needs to be equitable and progressive.

*Liz Storer*, *Candidate for House District 23*

* Local: SPET and state sources
* State:
	+ Funding for the carbon reduction strategies noted above
	+ Overhaul Wyoming’s tax policy so we can reduce our dependence on fossil fuels
* Federal: revisions to the federal tax policy to increase taxes on high income individuals and corporations while making the transition to clean fuel easier for low- and middle- income families.