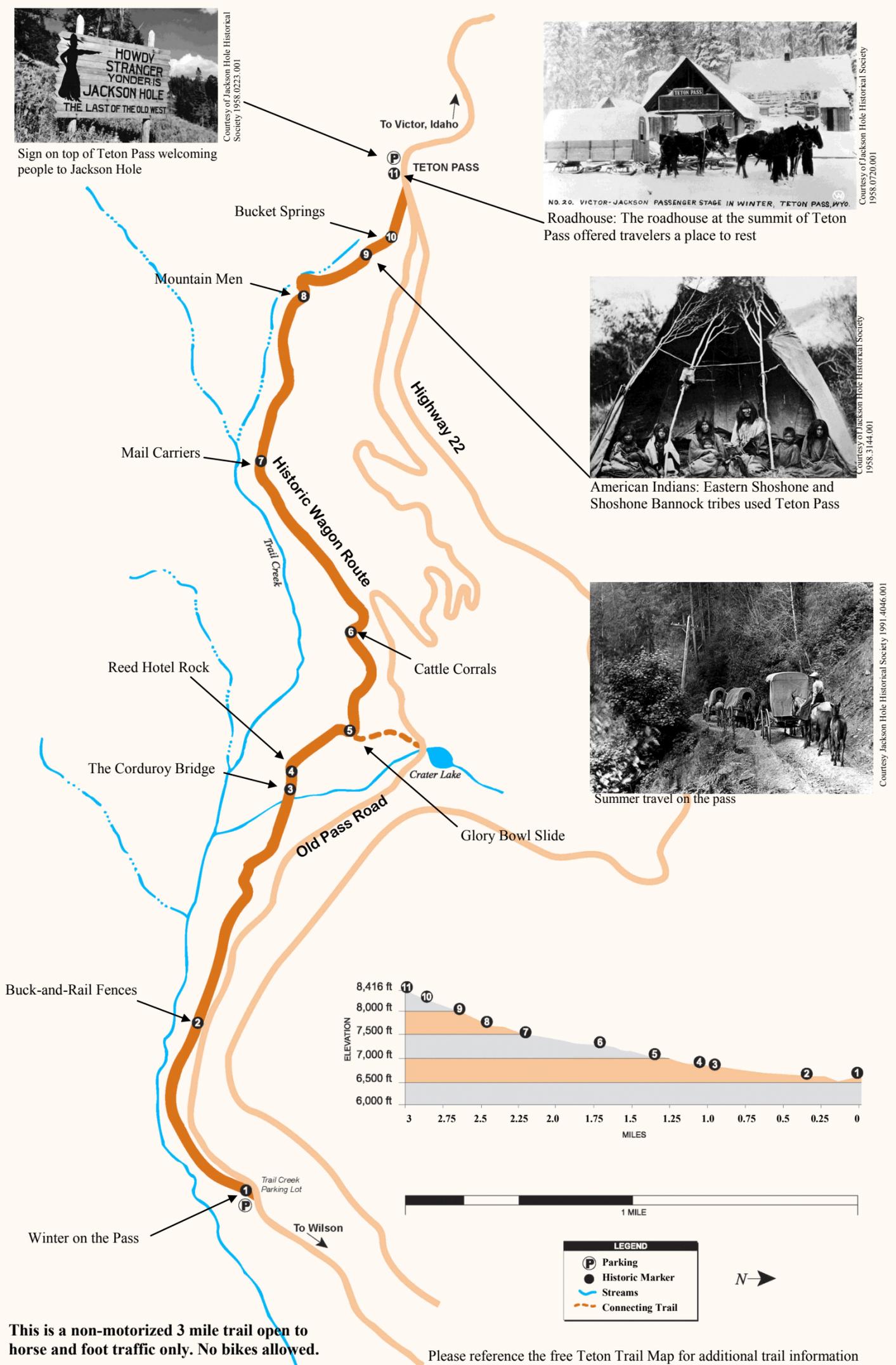


# Historic Wagon Route



**This is a non-motorized 3 mile trail open to horse and foot traffic only. No bikes allowed.**

Please reference the free Teton Trail Map for additional trail information

**Y**ou are standing in an historic spot! Whether you travel from the top of the Historic Wagon Route to the bottom, or from the bottom to the top, you tread in the footsteps of those who came before. A fault divides the southern end of the Teton Range from the northern part of the Snake River Range. For thousands of years this break in the mountains, Teton Pass, has been the best route for travel into and out of Jackson Hole. This place and these mountains have influenced how people—from American Indians to modern recreational enthusiasts—have lived, worked, and played in Jackson Hole. As you explore the Historic Wagon Route think about how the natural world—water, geography, topography, plant and animal life, weather and climate—influenced the history of this region. You, too, may be influenced by Teton Pass and the legacy of those you follow.

## 1 Winter on the Pass: Harsh conditions challenged travelers

The natural environment made traveling Teton Pass challenging—especially during winter. Yet by 1905 this Historic Wagon Route was used enough to keep the snow road "broke out" all winter, despite storms that could drop as many as fifteen feet of snow. Horse-drawn sleds carried people and supplies over the pass from Victor to Wilson. Horses would get stuck up to their bellies, and word has it that going down was easier than coming up!



Extra teams of horses were needed to pull sleds up Teton Pass in winter

## 2 Buck-and-Rail Fences: Cowboys herded cattle through steep terrain

The steep terrain on this section of the Historic Wagon Route required ranchers to build buck-and-rail fences. These fences prevented cattle from dropping down to the creek. Cattle passed through here single file with cowboys guiding them. Sixty percent of all cattle raised in Jackson traversed Teton Pass to get to the railroad in Victor. This wagon road witnessed numerous cattle drives until the railhead in Victor closed in the 1970s.

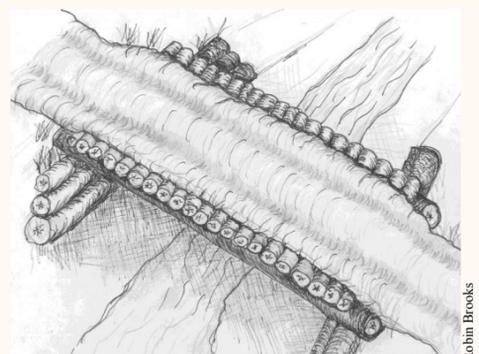


Cowboys and horses driving cattle across an open meadow

## 3 The Corduroy Bridge: Using native materials to negotiate the natural world

Take a look around you and notice the wet areas. High mountain springs and wet seeps created deep mud holes on this well-traveled path. Settlers cut down trees and laid

the logs across mud holes to harden the tread, allowing horses and wagons to get through the mud. These structures are called corduroy bridges.



A corduroy bridge allowed travelers of Teton Pass to cross wet, muddy spots on the trail.



Sign on top of Teton Pass welcoming people to Jackson Hole



Roadhouse: The roadhouse at the summit of Teton Pass offered travelers a place to rest



American Indians: Eastern Shoshone and Shoshone Bannock tribes used Teton Pass



Summer travel on the pass

# The Historic Wagon Route: How the nature of Teton Pass shaped history



This brochure is brought to you through a partnership between the Natural History Interpretation program of Teton Science Schools and the United States Forest Service.

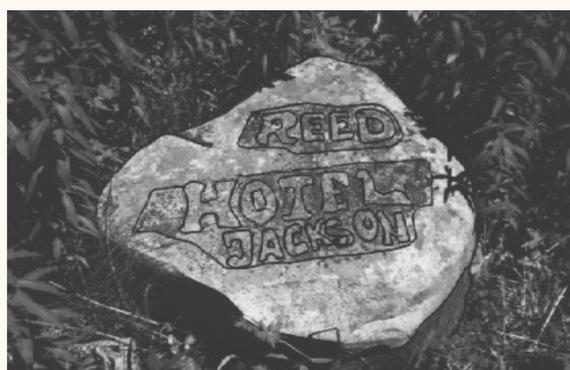
We would like to thank all the people who have helped make this brochure possible, particularly Doris B. Platts, Keith and Diane Benefiel and the Jackson Hole Historical Society. Without their forethought and time this project would not have been possible.



For further information on the history of Jackson Hole, see *A Place Called Jackson Hole* by John Daugherty, *The Pass* by Doris B. Platts, and the Jackson Hole Historical Society.

## 4 Reed Hotel Rock: A surprise advertisement on a natural feature

Look around. Can you find a rock used as a billboard? Using natural features for survival was a common practice throughout history, and the Reeds, who owned a hotel in Jackson, used this natural feature to advertise their business. Ma Reed ran the hotel for nine years from 1908 until 1917 when the Crabtrees took it over. Though the hotel has long-since closed this natural sign remains as part of the history of Teton Pass.



An advertisement for the Reed Hotel on a rock along the wagon route



Avalanche path on Mount Glory

## 5 Glory Bowl: Avalanches are a dangerous reality of Teton Pass

Avalanches have influenced the nature of Teton Pass and the lives of people who depend on it. Glory Bowl is the bowl-shaped chute just below Mount Glory which rises to 10,086 feet. Snow collects and slides down this bowl throughout the winter. To manage this, the Wyoming Department of Transportation often triggers "controlled" avalanches for greater safety on Teton Pass.

## 6 Cattle Corrals: A natural stopover for livestock

Cattle were driven from Jackson Hole by the hundreds, corralled at night in this open meadow, and taken over Teton Pass to the railhead in Victor. Can you find their watering holes? Perhaps you notice the difference in the vegetation of this area. These corrals remain as evidence of how cattle influenced Teton Pass. Because of the open grasslands of Jackson Hole cattle ranching was the economic mainstay of the valley by 1913.



Cattle being corralled in the open meadow along the wagon route

## 7 Mail Carriers: Traveling Teton Pass to connect local residents to the outside world

The sheer, rugged nature of this mountain range made communication with the outside world difficult. Before Jackson's official mail service in 1892 local residents carried post by foot over the pass to Victor, Idaho. This two-day trip was the only way to send and receive letters and packages. The establishment of the mail service gave residents a timely, dependable means of contacting their family and friends.



Mike Yokel, a resident of Wilson, taking mail over Teton Pass

## 8 Mountain Men: Trappers found a land rich in furs

Legendary mountain men like John Colter and David E. Jackson walked this trail in the early 1800s. Teton Pass connected these men to a "hole"—a valley surrounded on all sides by mountains. Jackson's Hole supported a habitat rich in beaver and other fur-bearing animals. The mountain men traveled Teton Pass to "rendezvous" in Pierre's Hole, now modern-day Victor, where they would trade goods and swap stories. With few supplies, mountain men relied heavily on the natural world for survival.



Mountain men used Teton Pass until the 1840s

## 9 American Indians: Early people's lives were intertwined with the natural world of Teton Pass

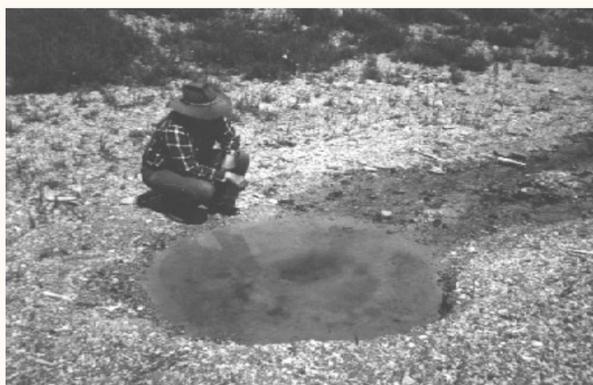
American Indians depended on the natural world for survival. For nearly 11,000 years prehistoric people used Teton Pass seasonally for its access to plants, animals, and other natural materials. Several outcroppings of obsidian—a glassy, volcanic rock used for making sharp tools—are located near this area. Obsidian from these quarries was traded throughout the United States.



9,000 year old obsidian projectile point from Teton Pass

## 10 Bucket Springs: A source of water and life

You have just summited Teton Pass and feel exhausted and thirsty, but where is the water? Water is scarce at high elevations. This small, natural spring supported the weary travelers and their livestock. Bucket Springs, located ¼ mile from the roadhouse, sustained those who stayed at the roadhouse. This cold-water spring still bubbles today.



Bucket Springs is a natural spring that provided water to horses and people traveling Teton Pass

## 11 The Roadhouse: A resting place where mountain ranges meet

Imagine feeling the relief of finally reaching the top of Teton Pass after an intense struggle with the steep pathway. It often took the early settlers two weeks to get their livestock, families and wagons over the trail. This pass is the break between the Teton Range and the Snake River Range. A roadhouse stood at the summit to refuel tired travelers.



One of the families that ran the roadhouse

Just like you, there are many people who use Teton Pass with its special landscape for recreation. In the winter, skiers and snowboarders enjoy the abundant snow settlers once struggled through. Hikers and horseback-riders use this old wagon road that American Indians and settlers used more than a century ago. From the geology to the plants and animals, the natural world influences the history of the area. As you explore the Historic Wagon Route, remember that you are walking in the footsteps of those who came before. They influenced the present as you will influence the future. Treat Teton Pass with care.