



What is Threatening Jackson Hole's Streams?



Where is Jackson Hole located?

Jackson Hole (originally called Jackson's Hole by the mountain men) is a valley between the Teton Mountain Range and the Gros Ventre Range in Wyoming sitting near the border of Idaho.

What is threatening Jackson Hole's streams?

Two cherished streams draining the central, developed parts of Jackson Hole are now listed as "impaired" by environmental regulators due to fecal bacteria pollution. All of Fish Creek and portions of Flat Creek officially have an E. coli problem, according to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Nutrient pollution was considered the culprit, and several years later the USGS issued another report looking at contributors of nitrogen and phosphorus to the watershed. Those contributors are atmospheric deposition, livestock, fertilizers, septic systems and wastewater plants. Wyoming DEQ does not have regulations governing nutrients.

Why is E. coli in the streams bad?

Consumption of or contact with water contaminated with E. coli can cause a variety of illnesses. Minor gastrointestinal discomfort is probably the most common symptom; however, pathogens that may cause only minor sickness in some people may cause serious conditions or death in others, especially in the very young, old, or those with weakened immunological systems.

What is being done to resolve the problem?

Flat Creek is among those in line for a plan that would remedy its habitat impairment. That plan, which establishes a "total maximum daily load" for contributing pollutants, is being prioritized for 2022, according to the DEQ report. However, a plan to fix the E. coli issues in Fish and Flat creeks is not yet on the near-term agenda.



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