

**Jonathan Schechter – “Corpus Callosum” Column**  
**Jackson Hole News&Guide – May 5, 2010**

Today’s column is an exercise in shameless self-promotion, singing the praises of 1% for the Tetons.

In late 2005, I organized the Sustaining Jackson Hole “State of Our Community” conference. Our keynote speaker was Yvon Chouinard, part-time Jackson Hole resident and founder of the Patagonia sporting goods company. During his address, Yvon talked about 1% for the Planet, an effort he co-founded in 2002 with Craig Mathews, the owner of Blue Ribbon Flies in West Yellowstone.

The 1% concept is powerfully simple. Members of 1% for the Planet donate one percent of their sales to environmental causes of their choice. In return, they get a tax deduction, marketing support, and the knowledge that they’re using their business’s success to help the planet’s health.

In the audience that night was local retailer Sean Love. Long ago, Sean had an equally simple and powerful realization: because his customers come to Jackson Hole to enjoy our landscape, wildlife, recreational opportunities and the like, his business can never be healthier than the region’s natural environment.

Listening to Yvon, Sean figured there had to be a way to harness Yvon’s idea with his, to directly link local businesses with helping sustain the Tetons’s ecosystems. He called me up, we had a couple of beers, and a few months later, Sean’s kernel of an idea had become 1% for the Tetons, the first local chapter of 1% for the Planet.

As with 1% for the Planet, 1% for the Tetons members donate one percent of their gross sales. Two differences distinguish the organizations, though. One is that members of 1% for the Tetons also automatically become members of 1% for the Planet; the reverse is not true. The other is that 1% for the Tetons members make their donations directly to 1% for the Tetons, which uses their contributions to fund sustainability-related projects in the Tetons region.

To date, 1% for the Tetons has been quite successful: In three years, our members have donated \$372,000 to fund 27 fund local sustainability-related projects. But because there’s a chance for us to be far more successful, this coming weekend we’re launching a new approach toward funding grants.

Our new approach differs in two significant ways from what we’ve previously done. First, rather than rely on a grants committee to allocate members’ donations, 1% for the Tetons members will now be able to choose which projects they want their donations to support.

Second, we’re now allowing anyone in the world – whether an individual or non-member business – to help support the projects we fund. In particular, anyone with internet access and a credit card can go to our website (1PercentTetons.org), learn about the proposed projects, and make a secure on-line donation to support any – or all – of the proposals. Tools on the website will also allow users to track, in real time, each project’s progress toward its funding goal.

Using this approach, this year 1% for the Tetons hopes to raise a total of \$300,000 to fund our 19 finalist projects. We’ve given ourselves 28 days to raise this sum, an effort we’re calling “One28: 1% for the Tetons; 28 Days of Funding Our Future.”



**FOR THE  
TETONS**

[1PercentTetons.org](http://1PercentTetons.org)

One28 kicks off this coming Saturday afternoon (May 8) at our first annual Sustainability Grants Conference, and ends four weeks later, at midnight on Saturday, June 5. When One28 ends, we hope every one of the 19 finalists will have received enough money to pursue their proposals, and in so doing make a difference in sustaining the Tetons region.

This Saturday's sustainability grants conference will be held at Spring Creek Resort from 2:00-5:00 pm, followed by a social hour. All members of the greater Tetons community are welcome to attend and learn more about how on-the-ground sustainability is happening the Tetons region (and not just Jackson Hole – the name is 1% for the Tetons).

The conference's theme is "Extreme! Green? Embracing Adventure AND Sustainability." From 2:00 - 4:00 pm, each of the 2010 finalists will give a five minute presentation on their proposed project. From 4:00 - 5:00 will be the keynote speech, delivered by Mark-Hans Richer, the Senior Vice-President and Chief Marketing Officer for Harley-Davidson Inc.

Yes, that Harley-Davidson. Motorcycles. Machismo. Testosterone.

So why are we bringing in Harley-Davidson's Chief Marketing Officer to give the keynote address at our Sustainability Grants Conference? Because as odd as it may seem, Harley-Davidson has recently embraced sustainability as one of the pillars of its strategic plan.

Which, if you think about it, is like Jackson Hole embracing sustainability. Harley-Davidson is to transportation what Jackson Hole is to resorts, the baddest, boldest, toughest brand out there, the product which tests you, which shows you belong with the big boys.

Both Harley-Davidson and Jackson Hole have worked long and hard to develop their reputations, and both deserve them. Yet both are embracing sustainability. And that's a pretty remarkable thing, something well worth exploring because we both face the same fundamental challenge: How do we maintain our extreme reputations while still pursuing sustainability? We don't know, and neither do they. But isn't it cool that we're both asking the question?

We live in a skeptical age, but even a sunny optimist can see that, when it comes to sustainability, there's often a huge gap between what a company or community aspires to and how it actually acts. And don't get me started about all the "sustainability-washers," the companies and communities which spend more energy shouting the sustainability talk than they do crawling the sustainability walk.

But when it comes to sustainability, the key point for me is not whether Jackson Hole or Harley-Davidson is as pure as the driven snow. We're not. They're not. Neither is any other community or corporation (just ask Yvon about Patagonia – it may be the greenest company going, but it's still not sustainable).

Instead, the thing to keep in mind is that all of us are just beginning this journey, one which the post-Industrial world has never taken before. Because of that, we can learn a lot from Harley-Davidson, just as they can learn a lot from us. We're both embarking on an interesting ride, and we hope you'll join us on Saturday.



*Mark-Hans Richer  
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