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Conservation Alliance recognizes Craigheads

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Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance recently honored Sophie and Derek Craighead for their lifetime commitment to conservation.

"Sophie and Derek have long been committed to the Jackson Hole area and beyond," Nancy Taylor, alliance co-vicechair, said when presenting the award at the group's annual meeting Dec. 2. "Together they are wonderful assets to the whole community and to the alliance."

Each year since 2003, the alliance has recognized an Outstanding Conservationist of the Year.

Sophie Craighead received her bachelor's degree from the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and master's degree from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. A well-known philanthropist, she supports many diverse causes from land mine eradication in Sri Lanka, to housing homeless pets, to preserving the environment, the alliance said in a news release.

In the valley, Sophie Craighead supports local and regional conservation projects and played a key role in retiring grazing allotments, which protects public lands. She serves and has served on many boards, including PAWS of Jackson Hole, the Jackson Hole Community School, Teton County PAL, the Delta Society, the Curran-Seeley Foundation, Craighead Beringia South, the Jackson Hole Community Foundation and the Charles W. Engelhard Foundation.

Derek Craighead, an ecologist and the founder, president and executive director of Craighead Beringia South, has devoted many years to ground-breaking environmental research, the alliance said. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in wildlife biology from the University of Montana. He has worked in Wyoming, Montana and Alaska.

As the leader of Craighead Beringia South, Derek Craighead has focused his work on research and advocacy, connecting studies and data to real-life recommendations for managing Jackson Hole wildlife, the alliance said. His work on the downstream impacts of lead bullets on ravens, eagles and the larger ecosystem has led to grant funding for copper bullet giveaways and broad-based attention on the issue.

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