

The Corner Post

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources & Policy Division
Newsletter



WY. Dept. of Agriculture
Natural Resources & Policy Division
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“Opie, you haven’t finished your milk. We can’t put it back in the cow, you know.”
-Aunt Bee Taylor

*Cover photo courtesy of Vicki Gibson

BLM Grazing Permittees *Private Information Available to the Public*

Chris Wichmann, Senior Policy Analyst

In September 2010, Western Watersheds Project (WWP) won a lawsuit against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to disclose the names and addresses of BLM grazing permittees. Chief Magistrate Judge in the U.S. District Court of Idaho ruled *“...the public interest in monitoring the BLM’s rangeland program outweighs the minimal privacy interests held by... permittees.”* The Court also concluded *“...disclosure of the names and addresses of the individual permittees (category 2b) as well as addresses of the closely held entities or family owned businesses (category 2a) would not constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy...”*

Based on this ruling the BLM published a notice in the Federal Register on December 29, 2010 (Federal Register: Vol. 75, Number 249, pages 82061-82064) proposing to change the use of information obtained for administering grazing authorization.

The BLM also sent a letter to all permittees generally explaining the

Federal Register notice and the 40-day public comment period. The BLM presented the option to all grazing permittees who do not want their address publicly available on the BLM’s website, will have up to 60-days from the date the Federal Register notice was published to provide the BLM with an alternative mailing office (i.e. Post Office Box). The alternate mailing address will be the official address for receiving mail from the BLM.

The BLM will not release permittee’s telephone information or permittee’s financial information on the publicly available website.

If you have any questions regarding the Federal Register, the BLM letter to permittees or the Court Decision, please feel free to call our office. ✦





Justin Caudill, WLCI Program Coordinator

The Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) is a long-term, science-based program to assess and enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitats at the landscape scale in southern Wyoming, while facilitating responsible development through local collaboration and partnerships. In fiscal year (FY) 2010, the WLCI, working with partners funded 25, (5 new and 20 continuing) projects.

Projects were grouped in seven categories; aspen treatments, conservation easements, fencing, invasives, wetland/riparian, other vegetation treatments, and research projects. Listed below by project category are the units, or acres of accomplishment.

Aspen: Five projects were funded in this category. Projects involved the mechanical removal of conifers, burns, re-seeding or planting of native vegetation and assessed viable aspen habitats.

- 11,393 acres of aspen habitat either mechanically treated or burned
- 61 acres of juniper thinning with seeding for bitter brush
- 30,000 acres of aspen habitat assessed
- Conservation Easements (CE): Three CE's were completed
- 49,133 acres protected under CE's

Fencing: Five fencing projects involved the removal, construction or conversion of existing fencing to wildlife friendly standards.

- 10 miles of wildlife proof fencing installed for wildlife underpass
- 13.5 miles of wildlife friendly fencing installed.

Invasives: Ten invasive projects were funded in 2010.

- 4546.5 acres treated for invasives
- 900 acres inventoried
- 3960 acres were monitored

Wetlands/Riparian: Three projects were accomplished in this category with the creation of habitat for Trumpeter Swans, revegetation of native species plants in riparian habitat and improvement of migration corridors.

- 13 acres of wetlands created or protected
- 9 acres of wetlands/riparian habitat maintained or improved
- 1 mile of revegetation of riparian habitat

Other: These three projects involved sagebrush treatments, native seed collections and assessment of special status trees.

- 10 acres of sage brush habitat treated
- 7 collections of native seeds
- 50 acres of assessment

Research: Two projects involved the assessment of special status plants and fish.

- 18 separate monitoring activities of species populations

The WLCI budget for 2010 was \$1,295,000 these funds were leveraged with partners funding for a total of \$23,515,595 spent on western Wyoming conservation measures and actions. ✦ **For more information on WLCI, please visit the website at www.wlci.gov or contact Justin Caudill at 307-352-0378 or jcaudi@state.wy.gov**



To receive an electronic or printed copy of The Cornerpost Newsletter please contact Michelle MacDonald at: 307-777-7323 or mmacdo@state.wy.us.
Our newsletter is also posted on the Wyoming Department of Agriculture website: <http://agriculture.wy.gov/divisions/nrp>

WANTED! Your Comments

Jessica Crowder, Senior Policy Analyst

As citizens of the U. S., we all have a stake in how our public lands are managed. Whether you use public lands for recreational pursuits such as hunting, fishing or hiking or are interested in commercial uses such as mineral production or livestock grazing, you have a voice when it comes to how those public lands are managed.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently embarked on revisions of several Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and associated Environmental Impact Statements (EISs). These RMPs are intended to guide management of BLM administered lands for the next 15-20 years. After years of work, it is exciting to know that several Draft RMPs/EISs are available to the public for comment in the coming year. The Draft Bighorn Basin RMP/EIS is the first available for public comment. The BLM will also hold several public meetings during the comment period. This RMP/EIS contains actions to guide both the Cody and Worland BLM Field Offices. The Lander RMP/EIS and the Buffalo RMP/EIS drafts should also be available in 2011 for public review and comment.

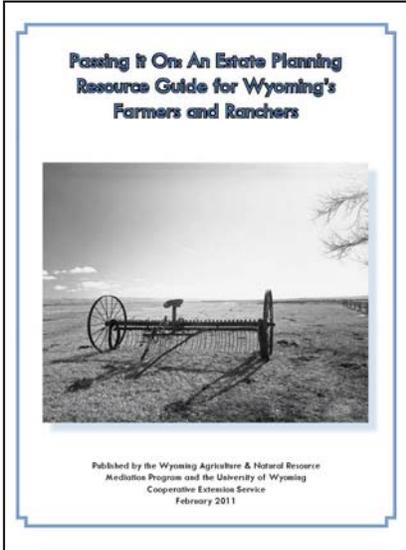
As mentioned in the fall 2009 edition of Cornerpost (<http://wyagric.state.wy.us/>) the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) is an active cooperater in the revision process. As a cooperater, the WDA has focused on evaluating the effects of proposed management on agriculture and has worked to make sure these effects are clearly stated in each RMP and EIS.

Soon, it will be your turn to comment. The BLM must hear from livestock producers. While decisions pertaining to individual livestock grazing permits are not made in the RMP, there are management actions that may affect livestock operations and management. It is imperative the BLM knows what the affects are on livestock producers, local economies and rangelands. The BLM seeks meaningful, specific and clear comments on the Draft RMP/EIS. If you are having trouble writing comments, please contact the WDA, your local conservation district, county commissioners or agriculture related groups. **To find the most recent information about each RMP revision process, visit <http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/programs/Planning/rmps.html>.**

New Edition of *Passing It On* Available!

Lucy Pauley, Mediation Program Coordinator

The second edition of "Passing It On: An Estate Planning Guide for Wyoming's Farmers and Ranchers" is now available. The first edition of "Passing It On" was developed through a partnership between the UW Cooperative Extension Service and the Wyoming Agriculture and Natural Resources Mediation Program. Completed in September 2004, the first edition was developed to provide Wyoming's agricultural producers with information on how to begin the



estate planning process. There have been changes in estate tax law and other developments since 2004 and the new edition will includes these updates and more.

The original authors of the publication began work on the new edition in the autumn of 2010. Based on requests from readers and input from other experts, new information has been added to the workbook. The additional topics include funeral planning, how to choose

Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for Ranch Management



Justin Williams, Ag Program Coordinator

Serene. Traditional. Rustic. Three words which conjure up the iconic images of the American Cowboy's lifestyle. While those are authentically descriptive, it is difficult to understand the realities of ranching unless someone has personal experiences in the industry. Ranching is a business where the top priority is to make a living off the land. These working ranches also provide the public many benefits, including open spaces and wildlife, which we all enjoy.

bird is listed, the intent of the CCAA is for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to provide participating ranchers with assurances to continue their existing operations while providing sage-grouse long-term habitat.

One wildlife species found on numerous Wyoming ranches is the sage-grouse. Ranches provide the open space sage-grouse need to thrive. Fragmentation is considered one of the top reasons for sage-grouse population decline. One way to reduce the decline of sage-grouse populations is to protect the habitat. The recent development of the draft Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA)



Sage-grouse photos courtesy of Mark Gocke

for Ranch Management is a cooperative effort by federal, state and local agencies in hopes of keeping the sage-grouse from not only declining, but to also reduce the need for being listed as a threatened or endangered species. If the

Currently, the committee working on the CCAA is creating one-page educational fliers for ranchers who may consider entering their ranch into an agreement with the Service. The fliers began distribution electronically in January 2011 with a new one coming out at the beginning of each month through June 2011. The goal of each flier is to break down the application process, reduce a rancher's fear of how an endangered species negatively impacts private property rights, and to create transparency between the Service and the ranching industry. Some of the articles describe how a rancher applies for a CCAA, the benefits of applying, who has access to private property and data collected and more. † *The CCAA fliers are emailed electronically in Portable Document Format (PDF). Please contact Justin Williams at 307-777-7160 or jwilli7@state.wy.us to be added to the email list.*

Passing It On (continued from page 3)

an advisor and dependent care insurance. A chapter on Succession Planning is being developed and will be available at a later date. There is also a comprehensive list of new resources available to assist Wyoming's farmers and ranchers.

Estate planning continues to be an issue that greatly affects Wyoming's agricultural producers. "Passing It On" is designed to help producers start the conversation about estate

"Passing It On" is available online at:
<http://ces.uwyo.edu/PASSINGITON.asp>.
On the website, chapters can be downloaded and printed in their entirety.

A hard copy of the workbook is also available for purchase for \$10.00.

Contact Lucy Pauley at (307) 777-8788 or lpaule@state.wy.us if you have any questions



planning, develop goals and objectives for their organization, take stock of the estate, learn about estate planning tools such as trusts, life insurance, conservation easements and more, and work with their families to develop a plan that can meet their needs. Estate planning is not a do-it-yourself project and the workbook strongly encourages families to find and work with the necessary professionals. †

American Bison and Cattle



Larry Bentley, Natural Resources & Policy Consultant

“Why do ranchers raise cattle instead of buffalo, when buffalo are so much better for the environment?” asked a teacher. I was giving a talk about native grasses to a group of ninth and tenth grade students in Casper. I couldn’t think of a ready answer so I said “because buffalo are hard to team rope.”

I decided on the way home I needed a better answer just in case the question came up again. So I started to research how bison used the range prior to settlement, compared to how cattle use it today.

The American Bison commonly called a buffalo is actually a very distant cousin to the two true buffalo, the Asian Water Buffalo and the African Buffalo.

The name Bison is a Greek word meaning ox like critter. Its first recorded use was in 1774. However, early French fur traders called the bison a *boeuf* (hence buffalo) meaning ox in French.

The American Bison once free roamed from the Great Bear Lake in Northern Canada to the Mexican State’s of Durango and Nuevo Leon, covering more than 42,155,800 square miles.

A bison bull stands approximately five feet tall at the shoulders and weighs over a ton; the cow is slightly smaller in size and weighs about a thousand pounds. A bison cow will consume about one and a half AUM’s per month.

The American Bison numbered about 60,000,000 until the middle 1800’s. As the Civil War ended and settlers came west the herds were killed off for hides and eliminated as the main food source for many Indians. By 1900 only one small herd of American Bison remained. That herd was and is still located in Yellowstone National Park and is



considered to be the only truly pure American Bison herd.

It should be noted, even with so many bison, and other large herbivores, such as, elk, deer, and antelope some of the early explorers and fur trappers nearly starved to death crossing Wyoming.

Today there are over 100,000 buffalo on ranches and these herds produce meat for many restaurants and other special markets.

We need to keep in mind that bison roamed free and if there was a drought, fire or simply an overgrazed area they could just move on to where forage was more available.

Continued on page 6

Americans with Disabilities Act

To obtain this publication in an alternative format, contact the Wyoming Department of Agriculture at (307) 777-7323.

Name	Type	Coordinates	Dist. Acres	Recl. Acres	Last Seeding	Seed Mix	Last Spatial	Last Quant.	Last Qual.	Recl. Stage	Status
Airport	Other	42.445855/-109.721333	3.92				12/31/2009				Rollover
Anadarko Compressor Station	Other	42.434095/-109.709163	5.57				12/31/2009				Rollover
Bridger Compressor Station	Other	42.421823/-109.702762	36.10				12/31/2009				Rollover
CAB 11-29	Well Pad	42.449231/-109.647922	4.69	4.08	10/01/2007		12/31/2009	05/24/2010	05/01/2010	Stage 1	Rollover
CAB 11-25	Well Pad	42.448372/-109.689825	4.86	4.07	10/01/2004	BLM Standard	12/31/2009	07/28/2010	06/02/2010	Stage 2	Rollover
CAB 11-30	Well Pad	42.451592/-109.648825	4.86	4.07	10/01/2004	BLM Standard	12/31/2009	07/28/2010	06/02/2010	Stage 2	Rollover
CAB 12-15	Well Pad	42.456045/-109.653188	3.97	3.09	10/01/2006		12/31/2009	05/24/2010	08/27/2010	Stage 2	Rollover

The Jonah Infill Tracking Development and Reclamation

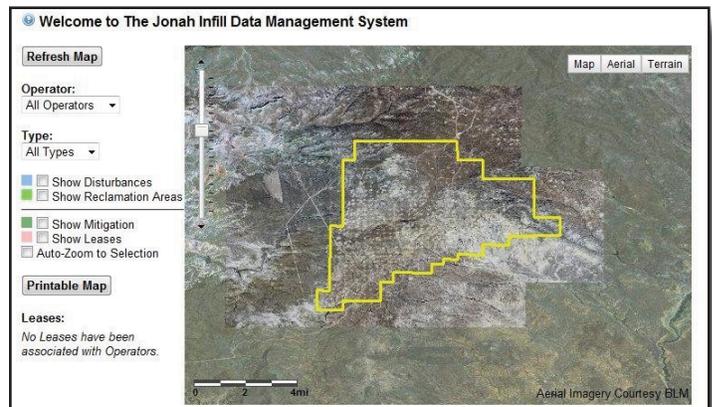
Windy Kelley, WDA/JIO

Have you heard of a natural gas field and wondered how many acres of land have been disturbed and reclaimed by a company in that field? Have you wondered what type of seed mix a natural gas company used when reclaiming a drill pad or a section of pipeline? If you have, and specifically about the Jonah Infill gas field, wait no more!

The power of technology has increased our ability to transfer more information across a wider distribution of people. Public service agencies are better able to provide transparency of public resources by using the available technology. The Jonah Interagency Office (JIO) worked with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to do just this through the development of an on-line database. Annually, natural gas operators upload data about the number of acres they have disturbed and reclaimed in the Jonah gas field located on federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The database is called the Jonah Infill Data Management System (JIDMS). It is a great venue for the BLM, JIO, operators, and the public to track what is happening in the field. Anyone can access the database located at <http://data.fort.usgs.gov/jio/home>.

And wait there's more! The Pinedale Anticline Project Office (PAPO) staff is working with the USGS to develop a similar data management system for the Pinedale Anticline Project Area, which is located north of the Jonah Infill. We anticipate the data management system will be launched this year. Visit our website at <http://www.wy.blm.gov/jio-papo/papo/index.htm> and keep an eye out for the acronym PADMS, which will link you to the PADMS website when it is launched. ✦

If you have questions about the JIO/PAPO offices or the databases, please contact Windy Kelley at WKelle@state.wy.us or 307.367.5378.



Bison and Cattle (continued from page 5)

Cattle came to North America from two sources. The first were brought by the Spanish explorers and priests as they explored and settled what is today the southwestern United States and Northern Mexico. The ones that escaped and became wild were the forefathers of the Longhorn breed that made the Cowboy famous.

The second was the milk and draft breeds that the European settlers brought to the East Coast of the United States and Canada. These cattle furnished food and hauled the wagons of settlers coming west. Some escaped and cross-bred with their wild cousins. These were the cattle that populated the western rangelands until the "Big Freeze of 1887/1888. Thousands of cattle died causing a great loss of money to many of the big ranchers forcing them to sell to some of the smaller ranchers and homesteaders.

That was the end of the open range and free roaming herds of cattle. Ranchers began to realize the need to manage the range and to irrigate land for hay to help feed their cattle through the winters.

Today, ranchers in the United States raise about the same number of cattle as there were buffalo in the 1700's, but we do it on a lot less land. Today ranches cover only about 8,760,154 square miles.

How do we do that? We do it by being good stewards of the land, developing water and managing our other natural resources. Additionally we have increased the population of elk, deer and antelope beyond the populations found in the 1700's. ✦

The Continuing Saga of Feral (Wild) Horses



Leanne Stevenson, Manager

The western image of horses running freely across the range has sparked passionate horse advocates to come out of the woodwork to protect an image. The problem with the image is it does not portray the real and complete picture of what is really happening on the range. Of course, I am preaching to the choir as most of you know all too well the issues surrounding the management of the growing numbers of feral horses in the west.

I wanted to let you know of some current happenings surrounding this critical agricultural and natural resource issue. As with any policy or issue having impacts to agriculture, the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) participates in discussions, policy negotiations and provides written and oral comments whenever possible. BUT, it is crucial for each of you to also participate in these processes.

Last year, the Department of Interior's Office of Inspector General was given the objective of determining if wild horse and burro gathers are necessary and justified, and if wild horses and burros are being mistreated. Their inspection report and memorandum was recently publicized. The inspection stated "wild horse and burro gathers are necessary because Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands cannot sustain the growing population of wild horses and burros. The growing population of these animals must be addressed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance of the authorized uses of the land, thus gathers are necessary and justified

actions. Further, we did not observe any inhumane treatment of wild horses and burros."

Secretary of the Interior Salazar offered a strategies proposal last summer which received thousands of comments. We are waiting for his modified proposal and would encourage you to review it when it comes out. The draft proposed strategies would have serious consequences for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)'s management of wild horses. In evaluating the proposal, not only do we have to keep in mind the impacts to agriculture and natural resources, we must also be mindful of the escalating costs of managing the overpopulation of the wild horses and burros.

The BLM and the State of Wyoming currently operate under their August 13, 2003, ten-year agreement for wild horse management in the state most commonly referred to as the "Consent Decree." Discussions have begun and plans to expand discussions on extending the Consent Decree are in progress. We want and need your input in moving forward.

Watch for more information surrounding this key issue for Wyoming. Don't be afraid to educate yourself and others around you with the facts of this publicly scrutinized issue. We need to continue explaining the real image and impacts associated with an overpopulation of feral horses on our western landscapes. †





Upcoming Events

March 3:	Annual Industry Conference, Rawlins	June 1-4:	WY Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show, Laramie
March 10-11	Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting, Phoenix	June 7-8:	WY Association of Conservation Districts Spring Board Meeting, Evanston
April 11-12:	WY Board of Agriculture Meeting, Cheyenne	June 14:	WY Board of Agriculture Conference Call
Late April/ Early May	Joint Agriculture, State and Public Lands & Water Resources Committee Meeting (<i>Watch the State of Wyoming Legislature website for more information.</i>)	August 13-20:	WY State Fair, Douglas
May 10:	WY Board of Agriculture Conference Call	August 19:	WDA Ag Awards Ceremony, Douglas
		August 19:	WY Board of Agriculture Meeting, Douglas

If you have questions or comments about the information in this newsletter, please contact Michelle MacDonald, WY Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources & Policy Division at 307.777.7323 or mmacdo@state.wy.us

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