



The Corner Post

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources & Policy Division
Newsletter



WY. Dept. of Agriculture
Natural Resources & Policy Division
2219 Carey Avenue
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Quotable Quotes

"Condensed milk is wonderful. I don't see how they get a cow to sit on those little cans."

-Fred Allen

*Cover: Mule Deer on the Pinedale Anticline, photo by Eric Decker

Prairie Dog Translocation

Ensuring Options & Ag Producers' Involvement

Justin Williams, Senior Policy Analyst

Punxsutawney Phil, the famed groundhog celebrated his 126th year of forecasting winter on February 2, 2012 in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. While we can appreciate Phil's predictions on Groundhog Day, we can only hope Phil, a distant cousin to Wyoming's famed black and white-tailed prairie dogs, would equally appreciate the efforts of those who wrote comments and testified at the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) Commission hearing in late January 2012 regarding the translocation of prairie dogs.

Prairie dogs are a species many private landowners despise for the damage they cause, the grass they eat and the expense to treat them, while others revere them for their value to endangered species such as mountain plover, burrowing owls or black-footed ferrets. In an effort to find a balance, mostly on federal lands, an existing policy through the WGFD was recently revised.

The policy requires the Commission to approve any translocations prior to any work proposed. These translocations are also permitted through WGFD regulation; Chapter 33 permit (Governing Issuance of Scientific Research, Educational or Special Purpose Permits) and/or Chapter 10 permit (Importation, Possession, Confinement,

Transportation, Sale and Disposition of Live Wildlife).

Some of the highlights of the new policy include the reasons for a translocation, what the permit application must include, timing restrictions when translocations can occur, quarantine of translocated prairie dogs, inclusion of affected parties prior to application submission, and requirement of a final report to the WGFD at the end of the permit.



The translocation of prairie dogs is likely a foreign concept and many wonder why it is even proposed. Again, there are many broad spectrums of interests out there, one of which includes livestock grazing. The change in a policy such as the Translocation of Prairie Dogs can have a significant impact on agricultural operations.

This provides a good example of the importance to get involved early, attend meetings, return phone calls, and provide both written and oral testimony before the policy is finalized. The Wyoming Department of Agriculture encourages livestock operators to have a current copy of the policy prior to negotiations to translocate prairie dogs. Interested individuals can locate the policy at: <http://gf.state.wy.us/web2011/home.aspx> or call the WGFD at: 307-777-4600. ✦

Buckhorn/18 Mile Flowing Well

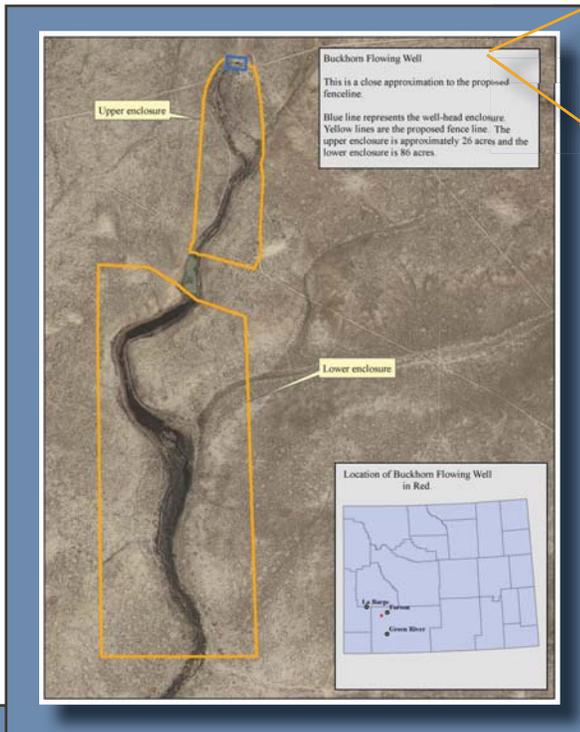
Working together to benefit livestock

Justin Caudill, Ag Program Coordinator

With so much focus on the greater sage-grouse, combined with discussions over the effects energy development and grazing may or may not place on grouse habitat, I thought I would share a project being implemented in southwestern Wyoming that will benefit sage-grouse. The project involves the support and hard work of local Ag producers, volunteers, energy companies, businesses, and state and federal agencies.

The Buckhorn/18-Mile Flowing Well fencing project is located approximately 26 miles west of Farson WY, in the center of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) 18-mile common allotment. The surrounding area consists of sage brush, native grasses and has limited water. In 1956 a drilling rig hit water at the 18-mile well location; this water has been used by wildlife, wild horses and agriculture for the past 56 years. The water source also provides about a half-mile of riparian vegetation and a large grass meadow.

In the summer of 2009 a permittee utilizing 18-mile common allotment brought forward a proposal to the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) to fence off the well, stream and meadow with the intent of protecting the water source and increasing sage-grouse brood rearing habitat. A reservoir would remain unfenced provide water to wild horses, wildlife and agriculture. The project proposal was shared at WLCI public meetings and with the Southwest Sage-grouse Working Group.



The blue box at the top of the photo is the completed phase one enclosure, the phase two enclosure is the larger orange line that ties into the phase one fence. The reservoir, which will remain open to livestock and wildlife lies between the two orange enclosures. Phase three enclosure will contain the meadow area.

Over several meetings the proposal was developed into three phases of construction by obtaining feedback from partners and agency specialists. Through the Southwest Sage-grouse Working Group, Devon Energy was contacted. Devon Energy donated over 1500 ft. of drill pipe to the project. The donated pipe was in Riverton WY, so the WLCI began looking for resources to transport the pipe to the Farson area. In 2010, with one phone call to the manager of Knight Oil & Tool, they graciously volunteered to haul the pipe from Riverton to the work location.

Also, in the summer of 2010 a multi-agency team from BLM, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Game & Fish Department and the US Fish & Wildlife Services began a pre-fence construction monitoring effort of the surrounding area for sage-grouse use. The team set up a total of five 100 meter transects, three outside the projected fenced area and two within, and are monitoring for sage-grouse pellet in the springs and fall each year. The pellets when found are logged to a specific location and transect, along with the number of pellets and then they are removed. This monitoring effort will

Continued on page 5

Rangeland Health Assessment - Update



Chris Wichmann, Manager

The Wyoming Rangeland Health Assessment Program (RHAP) is approaching the completion of its first year of service and looking to continue to develop sustainable rangeland health practices. In 2010, the Legislature passed the RHAP bill and provided \$20,000 to the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) to develop rules and processes for RHAP; \$100,000 was provided to the University of Wyoming (UW) to develop a database of peer reviewed literature and assist in monitoring efforts in the state; and \$200,000 for RHAP projects, which the funding was removed by the Governor. In 2011, the Legislature approved a supplemental budget request of \$200,000 to fund on-the-ground projects for RHAP.

Here is a summary of accomplishments over the past year.

- RHAP rules (Chapter 15) were developed (December, 2010).
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with partnering agencies (May, 2011). The MOU is important because it ensures the Parties agree to utilize rangeland monitoring in an effort to support and manage livestock grazing and to achieve desired conditions.
- UW developed a database of scientific literature and have collected 1448 records of peer reviewed scientific literature. They have also created white papers summarizing grazing and grazing impacts.

- UW funded two rangeland ecologists who monitored 17 allotments covering approximately 324,000 acres.
- The WDA funded 12 RHAP projects around the state.
- 12 RHAP projects covered approximately 810,097 acres.
- Matching/in-kind funds by RHAP partners were approximately \$193,571.
- Project partners consisted of UW Renewable Resources, UW Cooperative Extension, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investment, Wyoming Conservation Districts, Natural Resources and Conservation Service, the Nature Conservancy, permittees, and private landowners.

The WDA sees growing support and interest in the RHAP. We believe the benefits of this program will continue to grow and will help establish lasting healthy rangelands.

The 61st Legislature – Budget Session will determine the amount of funding available for the next two years. We anticipate additional Request for Proposals for projects to occur in the early summer of 2012.

If you have any questions or an interest in the program please contact the Natural Resource and Policy Division at 307-777-7323. ✦





Lucy Pauley, Mediation Program Coordinator

I've spent the last few months at various agricultural organization conventions and trade shows, promoting the services of the mediation program. While I'm sitting at the booth, I'll often talk with people about a situation they are facing and how mediation might be used. The question inevitably comes up, what if my neighbor/banker/family member/etc. won't mediate?

In Wyoming, mediation is a voluntary process and apart from a few exceptions, no one can be forced into participating in mediation. Those exceptions apply to those federal agencies who offer mediation as a step in their appeals process. If the permittee or borrower requests mediation, the agency is obligated to participate. They are not, however, obligated to come to an agreement.

So let's say that you are in the middle of a conflict with your neighbor over a shared road. While you originally split the costs for maintenance with the previous owner, this new neighbor isn't as willing to abide by this agreement. You've talked to an attorney but you aren't crazy about the idea of spending so much money on a lawsuit. You just want the neighbor to pay his fair-share for the road. You are considering mediation but are worried about wasting your time if the neighbor won't participate. You two stopped talking a few weeks ago and you don't see this situation getting resolved anytime soon. This is actually a good time to try mediation.

The mediation process is not difficult to initiate. The requesting party simply sends a letter, fax or email to the

Mediation Program requesting their services. The letter just needs to include a brief description of the issue and the name and contact information for the other side. The Mediation Coordinator can communicate to the other party the benefits of using the mediation process and the role the mediator can play in helping to resolve the issue. If this is a long-standing conflict, the Coordinator might communicate the cost-savings benefits for trying mediation. By highlighting the cost-savings, the role of the mediator in not making judgments, staying neutral and helping clear up communication, somewhat reluctant parties are often willing to give the process a try.

We've talked in other newsletter articles about suggesting mediation to a friend when you aren't part of the conflict. So how do you do it when you are part of the dispute? Try to frame it in a way that illustrates that the mediation process is not just to benefit you. If attorneys are involved in the dispute, talk to your attorney about wanting to try the process and have them submit it to the other side. The Mediation Program can work with the attorneys to get the process started.

There will obviously be situations where one side refuses to participate in mediation. If the conflict moves on to a judicial proceeding, you will have evidence that you tried to work out the problem without resorting to litigation. For more information, or to discuss a potential mediation issue, contact Lucy Pauley at (307) 777-8788 or lucy.pauley@wyo.gov. ✦





Larry Bentley, Eastern Program Coordinator

Remember back to the late 1970's and early 1980's when we first starting hearing about the environmental movement and the possible impacts it would have on agriculture?

Remember the answer we had back then? It is not going to affect agriculture, we are too important to the American people and their food supply.

What if we had taken time to get involved then? Would things be different today? Maybe if we had put the energy into defending our rights early on we could have controlled the impacts to our business today.

Maybe we could have taken control of the movement, before environmental groups gained the power and influence they have today.

We were too busy to respond to the misinformation and the propaganda enviromental groups were spreading about agriculture and agriculture's impact to the environment

and more often than not said "No one will believe that." Along came the National Environmental Policy Act, affecting the way we use the federal rangelands. Again, we were too busy to learn what was really happening to our rangeland and how the environmental groups were using the act to their advantage.

Later came rangeland monitoring, grizzlies, wolves, wild horse issues, mineral development impacts, sage-grouse, wind energy and the list continues to get longer and more difficult to deal with daily.

But, what if we had taken time to get involved, taken time to learn the process, taken time to respond to the false propaganda, taken time to tell our story? †

Would things be different today?

Buckhorn (continued from page 2)

continue in the spring and fall for several years, pre- and post-fence construction, to determine if the project actually improves grouse brood rearing habitat and usage.

The next steps involved local volunteers going out to the well site to remove approximately 15 acres of 25-plus year old dilapidated woven-wire fence that had become a snaring hazard to wild horses, wildlife and livestock. The volunteers were able to remove the wire, but the post were so firmly set that the producer who brought the project to light had to bring a tractor to pull them out of the ground.

The first phase of the project was completed in the fall of 2011, when BLM's Rock Springs Field Offices Force

Account Crew cut the pipe to appropriate lengths, set the posts and constructed the acre.

Phases two and three of this project involve building two enclosures; the first will be constructed into the phase one fence. Phase three will start below the reservoirs. The third phase fence, which will be the largest of the two enclosures, will protect the meadow, where we hope to increase cover and insects for brood rearing habitat. The phase two fence will be approximately 45-50 acres in size, and is undergoing NEPA development the winter of 2011-12. The meadow, phase three fence will protect 75-80 acres, and is scheduled for construction in 2013. †

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

Jonah & Pinedale Anticline: Monitoring & Mitigation

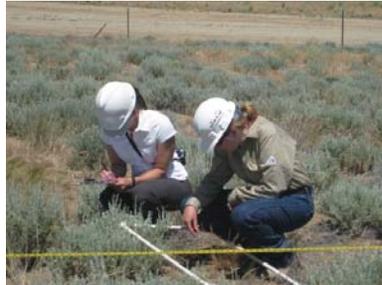
Windy Kelley, JIO/PAPO Coordinator

The Jonah Interagency (JIO) and Pinedale Anticline Project (PAPO) offices had another busy year in 2011, and are preparing to ramp up for an even busier 2012. Among the offices accomplishments in 2011 were the monitoring of over 100 well-pad locations, and several reclamation focused field visits with gas operators, contractors, and BLM Pinedale Field Office employees. The offices also coordinated the monitoring of multiple wildlife species per the 2008 Record of Decision for the Pinedale Anticline.

Additionally, multiple mitigation projects were implemented and/or completed such as the installation of two JIO-funded raptor platforms as offsite mitigation for ferruginous hawks, a BLM-designated sensitive species that has been impacted by oil and gas development within the Jonah Field. As additional mitigation, four water wells were drilled as part of three greater projects, the Noble Cora Peak, the Boulder Lake North Campground Improvement project, and the MJ Ranch Conservation Practices project.

The project offices will continue their monitoring programs in 2012.

Additionally, they will implement previously funded mitigation projects, such as continuing to pay permittees in the Jonah Field to graze their livestock in alternative pastures to mitigate grazing and gas development conflicts, and to help facilitate the establishment of reclamation. The JIO office anticipates completing the New Fork, East Fork rivers confluence boat ramp and river access project this coming summer by completing the parking area, boat ramp, and installing a comfort station and kiosk.

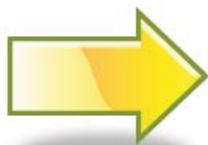


Collaboratively Monitoring with SWEPI's Contractor North Wind in DA-5 of the Anticline (Photo by Therese Hartman)



Windy Kelley and EnCana's Reclamation Specialist Ralph Swift in the Jonah Field (Photo by Eric Decker)

The JIO Executive Board decided in December 2011 to use remaining mitigation funds to support staff positions for monitoring and data management, as the fund begins to approach its sunset. The PAPO office will continue to solicit and fund mitigation projects. The PAPO staff have received, and will review and rank 15 proposed mitigation projects, requesting a total of \$6,641,847. The PAPO Executive Board will review the staff recommendations in May, and make a decision about which projects to fund. To learn more about the JIO and PAPO offices visit <http://www.wy.blm.gov/jio-papo/>. † (Title Photo by Eric Decker)



Notice to BLM Livestock Grazing Permittees/Lessees:



The 2012 Omnibus Spending Bill included a "Trailing" provision which exempts BLM from environmental law, litigation and regulations until environmental review of trailing/crossing permits is complete. This provision is in effect through Fiscal Year 2013.

If your operation relies on trailing/crossing permits, begin the conversation with your Range Specialist NOW! This ensures the environmental review for your permit will be accurate and complete by the deadline. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the WDA Natural Resources & Policy Division at (307) 777-7323. †

Using Livestock as a Vegetation Management Tool = **TARGETED GRAZING**



Jessica Crowder, Senior Policy Analyst

Landowners and livestock producers are familiar with traditional vegetation management techniques to create desirable vegetative conditions and ecosystems. A few traditional methods include prescribed fire, herbicide application, seeding and mechanical removal of trees and shrubs. But how often do we think of livestock grazing as an effective tool for managing vegetation? Even though livestock grazing has occurred for thousands of years, the tendency is to focus on livestock production and the economic benefits of good animal husbandry. However, livestock can be used to specifically shape and improve vegetative communities. This is where targeted grazing becomes an important and cost effective tool for vegetation management.

Launchbaugh et al. (2006) defined targeted grazing as the “application of a specific kind of livestock at a determined season, duration, and intensity to accomplish defined vegetation or landscape goals.” This concept is slightly different than prescribed grazing or good grazing management. Targeted grazing requires a clear vision of

the desired plant community and an understanding of how animal behavior and animal husbandry move you towards the desired “target.”

A common example of successful targeted grazing is the use of sheep and/or goats to control leafy spurge. Several entities in the Northern Great Plains use grazing practices alone or combine targeted grazing with biocontrol and herbicides to effectively reduce leafy spurge populations at a low cost while improving rangelands for cattle grazing. Carefully considered livestock grazing can also be used to reduce other unwanted plant species. Additionally, targeted grazing is used to create firebreaks, reduce fine fuels and shape wildlife habitat. There are many other ways to use targeted grazing as a cost effective approach to manage vegetation and landscapes. Additional research is being conducted to investigate these uses and the use of targeted grazing on public lands. Landowners, livestock producers, and land managers can all benefit from the use of livestock grazing as a vegetation management tool. ✦



More information about targeted grazing can be found in the publication *Targeted Grazing: A Natural Approach to Vegetation Management and Landscape Enhancement*.

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Upcoming Events

April 9-11:	WY Board of Agriculture Meeting, Cheyenne	July 10:	WY Board of Agriculture Conference Call
May 2-3:	JIO/PAPO Board Meeting, Pinedale	July 12:	Environmental Stewardship Tour, Pinedale
May 7-10:	Mediation Workshop, Cheyenne	July 15-19:	Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Cody
May 23:	WY Board of Agriculture and WY Business Council Joint Meeting, Pinedale	August 11-18:	WY State Fair 100 th Anniversary Celebration, Douglas
May 30-June 2:	2012 WY Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show, Jackson	August 12:	3 rd Annual Wyoming Ranch Rodeo Finals, Douglas
June 4-6:	Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts Spring Board Meeting, Douglas	August 17:	WY Board of Agriculture Meeting, Douglas
June 12:	WY Board of Agriculture Conference Call	September 13:	WY Board of Agriculture and WY Game & Fish Commission Joint Meeting, Casper

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 michelle.macdonald@wyo.gov.

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