

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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Quotable Quotes

"I asked the waiter, 'Is this milk fresh?' He said, 'Lady, three hours ago it was grass.'"
-Phyllis Diller

A Tale of the Times

Dealing with the Current Economy

Leanne Stevenson, Manager Natural Resource & Policy

Everywhere you turn these days you hear about the tough economic times and hear about budget cuts. Our division is not immune to the cuts being proposed for all state government funded programs. We are not certain the extent of cuts at this time, but we are working very hard to analyze all of our services and activities to identify areas to reduce expenditures.

With that said, we are looking at how we can maintain the distribution of our newsletter, but with less cost to our division, the Department of Agriculture and the State. One way to save money is to utilize current technology for distribution. This is the last Cornerpost Newsletter that will be commercially printed and solely distributed by regular mail to a mailing list of over 10,000.

Future newsletters will be available by the following methods:

- direct email to individuals and organizations,
- accessible on our website at http://agriculture.wy.gov/divisions/natres/news_info.htm
- Regular mail if a specific request is made.

This new form of distribution will provide us with an opportunity to get the newsletter to you quickly, add people to the mail list easier, and allow for each person we send the letter to electronically to forward on to others who may also be interested in the information – therefore reaching a larger audience.

In moving forward we need a response from each of you:

- 1. To continue receiving the newsletter by regular mail, please call or email Michelle at 307-777-7323 mmacdo@state.wy.us.**
- 2. To receive the newsletter by email, please email Michelle at mmacdo@state.wy.us with your name and email address. Please reference "Cornerpost" in the subject line of your email.**

We acknowledge the fact that in our technological advanced world, things don't always work as expected. I refer to the phrase often, "Embrace technology, but don't trust it." Please bear with us during this transition and help us save money for the benefit of the State. I would be happy to visit with you about this change. If you desire, you may call me at 307-777-6579. ✦

Managing Poisonous Plants on Wyoming Rangelands

Jessica Crowder, Senior Policy Analyst

As we continue to see spring snows and warm days in Wyoming, we also begin to see plant growth begin. This spring green-up is often exciting to livestock producers who are ready to finish winter feeding practices and let their animals out to pasture. However, it is important to remember that there are threats to livestock health out there. A couple common threats to Wyoming producers are larkspur (*Delphinium* spp.) and halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*).

Larkspur is a perennial forb with bright blue flowers and with a distinct spur pointing backwards. Cattle are most susceptible to larkspur poisoning, although horses and sheep can be affected as well. Alkaloids are the toxins involved in poisoning, and a lethal dosage ranges between 0.5% and 3% of an animal's body weight. Death results from respiratory failure and symptoms may include nervousness, stiffness, staggering, and falling followed by excessive salivation and frequent swallowing.

Larkspur blooms in spring and this is the time of greatest danger for poisoning. It is important producers identify larkspur before turn out occurs and develop a grazing plan accounting for areas of infestation. Cattle losses can be reduced by keeping cattle off heavily infested areas until after the plants have flowered. Grazing sheep before cattle may also help in prevention since sheep generally select forbs first and are less susceptible to poisoning from larkspur.



Halogeton is an annual forb with small, fleshy leaves. This plant is often found in disturbed areas and on alkaline soils. Sheep are most susceptible to poisoning, but cattle can be affected. Halogeton produces toxic oxalates and if ingested, cause kidney failure. Symptoms include staggering and muscle spasms.

Prevention of halogeton poisoning includes making certain animals have higher quality forage available. Often, livestock will not consume halogeton if better forage is available. In addition, as halogeton often grows in disturbed areas such as trails and corrals, it is necessary to make sure livestock are in good condition when entering these areas. Animals in good health are less likely to consume lethal doses of halogeton.

As the 2009 grazing season begins, remember, proper management of rangelands and livestock will reduce death losses in the long run. ✦

Reclamation Symposium Success!

Lisa Reinhart, WDA/JIO

On March 11th the WDA/JIO sponsored a reclamation symposium in Pinedale to encourage the sharing of successful reclamation techniques. Operators and other guests discussed new ideas and techniques that are being implemented to facilitate successful reclamation in the arid areas of the Jonah Field and Pinedale Anticline in Sublette County.



For a better understanding of the symposium, please contact Lisa Reinhart at 307-367-5386 or visit the JIO website at: http://www.wy.blm.gov/jonah_office/index.htm

Topics included the use of mat pads, irrigation, a study using livestock as a reclamation tool, using GPS technology on seeding equipment, mulching, hydroseeding, and the competitive nature of noxious weeds. The symposium was well attended by locals, the oil & gas industry, and government. It provided ample opportunity for everyone to share new ideas to better facilitate reclamation. ✦

Choosing an Expert

Lucy Pauley, WDA Mediation Coordinator


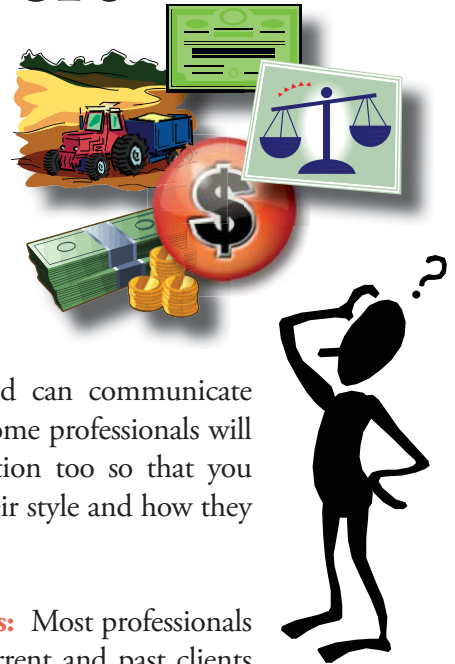
These days, most agricultural operations rely on experts to help with some of aspect of the business. Accountants and attorneys assist with estate planning issues. A range management consultant helps develop a grazing plan for improved pasture management. An insurance agent sits down with the family and provides options for long-term care and life insurance. Experts can play a valuable role in the agricultural operation. When it's time to choose that expert, here are a few tips to help you in your search.

1. **Determine your needs:** You'll save yourself time and possibly money if you are prepared. Try to determine what your needs are before you start looking for an expert.
2. **Ask around:** Get recommendations from friends and neighbors. Are they happy with the services they are being provided?
3. **Use a variety of resources:** The internet can help you in your search for an expert. The Wyoming State Bar has a search engine to help Wyoming citizens find an attorney in their community. The Wyoming Society of CPA's offers the same service. If you don't have access to the internet at home, most public libraries have internet capabilities. You can also use the yellow pages as a way to generate a list of potential experts.
4. **Interview:** Once you have a list of potential providers, set up a time to meet with them individually. Ask a few questions to see if you feel comfortable with their approach. Find out how often they handle your type of a case and if they

will be working on your case personally. While this can be time-consuming, the benefits of hiring someone that you feel comfortable with and can communicate with are worth it. Some professionals will offer a free consultation too so that you can get an idea of their style and how they work.

5. **Ask for references:** Most professionals will have a list of current and past clients that you can speak to.
6. **Comparison shop:** Don't choose an expert just because they have the cheapest fees, but do check around and make sure that their fees are in line with the rest of the industry.
7. **Pay attention to qualifications:** Most professionals (attorneys, accountants, financial planners) must be licensed by their respective state organizations.

With some planning, research and a little bit of legwork, you can find an expert who will help you maximize the potential of your operation. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Lucy Pauley with the Wyoming Agriculture & Natural Resource Mediation Program at (307) 777-8788 or lpaule@state.wy.us. ✦



Questions, Concerns, Complaints?
Wyoming Department of Agriculture Hotline
1-888-413-0114
Your Voice is Valued!

Conservation Districts

Justin Williams, Ag Program Coordinator

As rural subdivisions grow, you may also notice the small seedlings also growing in strategically placed windrows. Your local conservation district was likely involved, whether selling the seedlings or actually planting them. While you may have noticed the trees and read the sign accompanying many of these “Living Snow Fences” indicating the conservation district’s involvement, you may not know the multitude of other activities they are involved in and how they serve you and your communities.

More Than Just Tree Planters!



Lake DeSmet Conservation District

Tree planting occurs in early spring, so you may wonder what the districts do with the rest of their time. Many districts are heavily involved in sampling, testing and analyzing water quality in

streams, ponds, lakes and even wells. Grant money and in-kind matches help fund the water quality projects. To improve the water quality, districts work closely with private landowners, agency staff and committees to develop techniques and tactics for long term impact and benefit.



Star Valley Conservation District

There are 34 conservation districts across Wyoming, which all fall under an umbrella association; Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD). Each district has a board consisting of five supervisors serving

and overseeing activities of the district. These supervisors represent rural, urban and at-large constituents. The board guides the district and district staff through an annual plan ensuring tax dollars are spent accordingly.

Beyond this, district supervisors and staff are also educators by providing youth and adults with workshops and classes on a variety of topics including reclamation, recycling, vegetative monitoring, soils and more. It goes without saying; the districts provide local communities with a variety of services, most of which are yet to be mentioned, but are invaluable. For more information about the services the districts provide, be sure to look at the WACD website: <http://www.conservewy.com/>. Click on a district nearest you. ✦



Popo Agie Conservation District



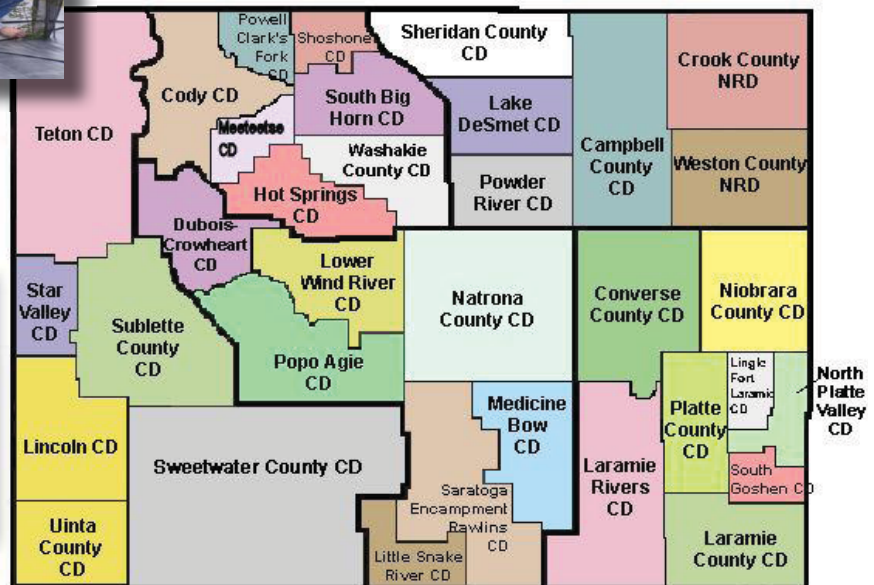
Powder River Conservation District



Shoshone Conservation District



Saratoga Conservation District



Monitoring *Establishing* Partnership *Responsible* Accessibility
Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative
 Assessment *Enhancing* Facilitation *Community*



Justin Caudill, WDA/WLCI

From its inception in 2007, the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) was a funding source for governmental agencies whose wildlife or habitat projects had all the necessary permits and NEPA requirements completed and were ready for implementation. During the past three years, the WLCI has gone through some growing pains. With the development of the Local Project Development Team (LPDT), a better description of the WLCI now is: An interagency working group consisting of governmental and private partners involved in the long-term science based goal of enhancing aquatic and terrestrial habitats, through developing and funding of projects on a landscape scale in Southwest Wyoming. At present there are four LPDTs, one each in Carbon, Sublette, Sweetwater and Uinta Counties.

The membership for LPDTs include field specialists from agencies, landowners/producers, Conservation District

members and concerned citizens and groups. LPDT areas were created based on watershed boundaries. These boundaries are flexible and LPDTs may be

involved with projects that encompass parts of one or more team areas.

One of the main functions of these teams is to share their priority and concerns with each other, within a specific watershed, and then address these issues by developing projects to take actions where priorities overlap. Doing so allows for smaller problems or issues to be addressed with the bigger picture for the area's resources and needs. Where needed, large projects can be broken down and small projects can be combined into large comprehensive projects to encompass a landscape scale approach.

The WLCI is developing its initial series of projects which will be implemented in 2010; more will follow as projects come on-line. At present partnerships working towards this end include, but are not limited to, the U.S. Department of the Interior, BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service, National Parks Service, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, U.S. Geological Survey, Wyoming County Commissioners Association, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts and other local government and non-government organizations. ✦



Rimfire Ranch Trumpeter Swan Habitat



Swans and chicks on a Rimfire Ranch created pond

If you have any questions or would like more information on WLCI, contact Justin Caudill at 307-352-0378



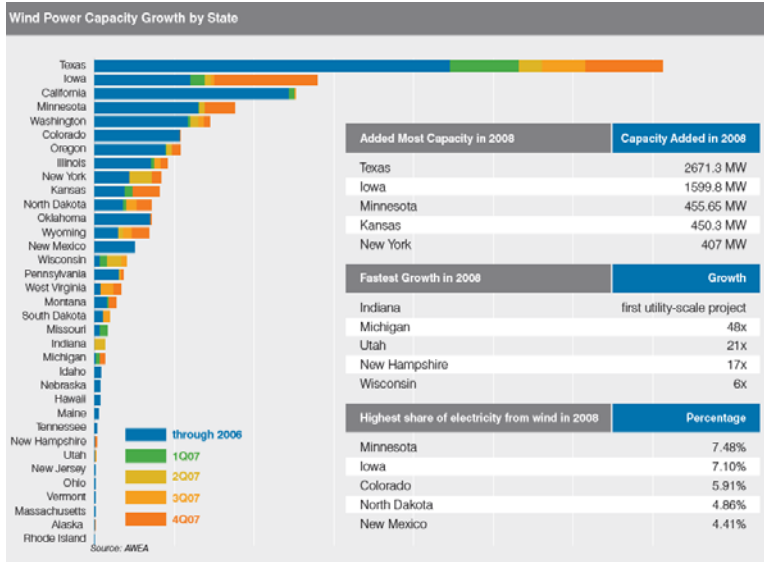
Wind Farm Development Update...

Chris Wichmann, Senior Policy Analyst

Wind developments have greatly increased in the country and in Wyoming with 8,545 mega watts (MW) added in 2008, compared to 5,249 MW added in 2007. It is projected development will increase again by 20% in 2009. Wyoming increased its installed MW from 288 MW to 676 MW, a 42.6% increase, with numerous more projects proposed across the state. Currently there are 10 wind energy projects operating in Wyoming:

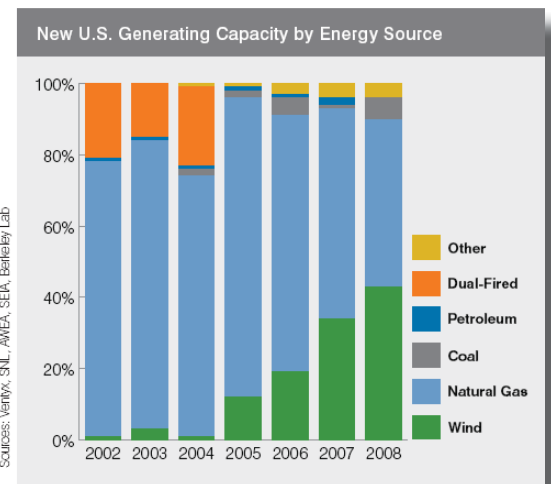
Current Projects Operating in Wyoming

Name	MW Produced	Number of Units	Year on Line
Glenrock	99	66	2008
Seven Mile Hill I & II	118.5	79	2008
Happy Jack	29.4	14	2008
Mountain Wind II	79.8	38	2008
Mountain Wind I	60.9	29	2008
FE Warren AFB	1.32	2	2005
Liberty Turbine Test	2.5	1	2005
WY Wind Energy Center	144	80	2003
Rock River	50	50	2001
Foote Creek Rim IV	16.8	28	2000



With the increase in wind developments across the nation, the industry has seen an increase in jobs. In 2007, there were approximately 50,000 jobs involved in the wind power industry, from manufacturing, maintenance and construction. In 2008 an additional 35,000 jobs were created. That is especially impressive in this current economy.

On the down side of this new development in wind power, there has been a decrease in new natural gas developments across the nation. This is mostly due to the low price of natural gas, but as wind continues to develop, it is predicted wind energy will eventually compete with and reduce natural gas prices. How this will impact Wyoming is to be determined. The table at right shows the amount of new energy generated by energy source in the U.S. ✦



Keys To Successful Rangeland Monitoring

Larry Bentley, Natural Resource and Policy Consultant

KEY ONE: Selecting site(s) to be monitored.

Selection of the key monitoring site(s) is the most important decision to be made once you have decided to start a monitoring program.

Information collected at the key site(s) will serve as an indicator of your management effectiveness. The data collected tells the story of what is happening on that site(s). A properly chosen key site and the monitoring data collected at that site can infer what is happening to an entire pasture.

Special care must be given to selecting an ecological site which represents condition, trend, and degree of use representative of individual pastures. Ideally, the site will be away from water, salt and mineral stations, trails and roads, corners or other areas which may not be true representatives of the grazing pressures of that pasture.

KEY TWO: Select key species that will identify trend.

Selecting key plant species does not mean you need to know every plant by its scientific name. But, you can readily identify a few of the native grasses common to the selected ecological site.

It is important to know if the native grass(es) selected as the key species is/are an increaser(s) or decreaser(s). If possible, having one of each is best. A increaser, by definition, is a grass that is a part of the original plant community of an ecological site and increases or remains stable with grazing pressure. A decreaser, by definition is a grass that is a part of the original plant community of an ecological site and decreases with grazing pressure.

By monitoring use of the site and the increase or decrease in plant numbers of the selected key species, a manager can identify the need to reduce or extend the length of a grazing season.

An example of some perennial native grasses common to Wyoming used as indicators include:

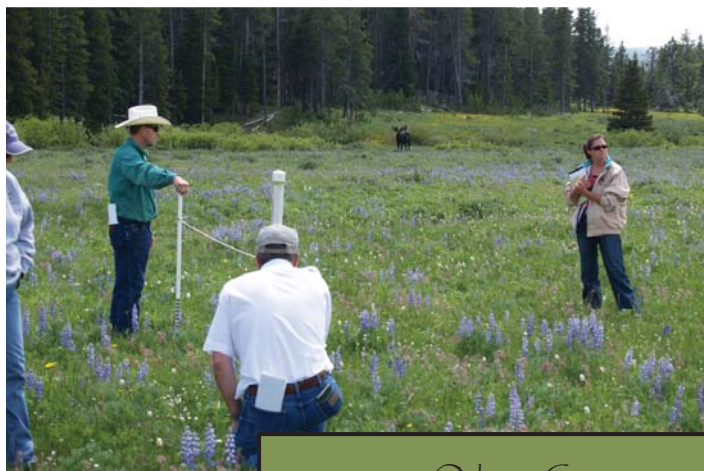
Increasesers

- western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*)
- needle-and-thread (*Hesperostipa comata*)
- Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*)

Decreasers

- slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*)
- thickspike wheatgrass (*Elymus lanceolatus*)
- green needlegrass (*Nasella viridula*)

Healthy native plant communities keep non-native grasses and weeds from invading Wyoming rangeland. †



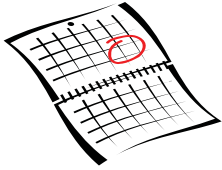
"Ode to Grass"

Remember, a plant with a big healthy top
Has a root that's full of vigor,
Reaching more moisture and nutrients,
So the rancher's half gets bigger.

—Bob Ross

Americans with Disabilities Act

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



Upcoming Events

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|---------------|--|------------------|---|
| June 1-4: | Mediation Training, Casper | September 3: | Conservation District Area III Meeting |
| June 3-6: | WY Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show, Gillette | September 4: | Conservation District Area IV Meeting |
| June 8-9: | WY Association of Conservation Districts Board of Directors Meeting, Douglas | September 9: | Conservation District Area I Meeting |
| June 9-10: | “Building The Wyoming We Want”, Casper | September 10: | Conservation District Area II Meeting |
| June 11: | Range 301 School, Worland | September 10: | WY Board of Agriculture Joint Meeting with WY Game & Fish Commission, Casper |
| August 13-14: | Wind Energy Symposium, Laramie | September 10-12: | Game & Fish Youth Expo, Casper |
| August 14: | WY Board of Agriculture Meeting, Douglas | October 13: | WY Board of Agriculture Meeting, Casper |
| September 2: | Conservation District Area V Meeting | November 16-19: | WY Association of Conservation Districts and Weed & Pest Joint Convention, Cheyenne |

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

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