

April 2020



## The Mountain Meadow

A quarterly publication from the  
Sublette County Conservation District



Photo by: Jess Artz

Spring is here, looking Forward to Summer!

## Highlights In This Issue

- NACD Convention
- Brucellosis Informational Meeting
- Conservation Conversations
- One Rock at a Time
- SCCD is Hiring!
- USDA Services for Farms/Ranches
- World Soil Day

Tree orders will be distributed April 30th & May 1!

*"By working with local people who understand local problems,  
the best conservation measures can be accomplished."*

# From the District Manager's Chair

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## What's going on at the District

Mike Henn, District Manager

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2019 has come to an end and the District is looking forward to a very productive 2020. We had another good snowpack this winter which hopefully means that we will have ample runoff and an excellent productive grass year.

In November, staff and the Board attended the 74<sup>th</sup> annual Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts meeting in Buffalo. Board and staff conducted business at the State level working through resolutions and learning about State level issues. I was elected to serve as the President of the Wyoming Conservation District Employees Association for my second term. Brad received his water quality monitoring certification as well. Everybody at the District also enjoyed having some time off around the holidays to spend time with family and friends.

We have hit the ground running this year. The District and the Green River Valley Cattlemen's Association co-sponsored an informational meeting on brucellosis for producers within the County as well as producers from across western Wyoming. A short writeup about the meeting can be found on the next page of the newsletter.

Along with many other public offices throughout the county, SCCD had to make some changes to office operations recently. Following direction from the Sublette County Health Officer regarding COVID-19, the Conservation District closed to the public effective March 19th. However, we are still working and available by email and phone so please contact us! Please see our website at [sublettecd.com](http://sublettecd.com) for updates or changes to office operations in the future.

# What We've Been up to

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## NACD Annual Meeting in Las Vegas

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SCCD Board Chairman, Coke Landers and District Manager, Mike Henn attended the National Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting in Las Vegas in February. Coke was a delegate for Wyoming to represent us at the national level. Mike is a member of the Public Lands Resource Policy Group and represented Wyoming at that committee.

Mike also had the opportunity to give a presentation to the group about our County's response to large wildfires and highlight the successes that strong partnerships have been able to produce in our County.

## Brucellosis Informational Meeting

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This public meeting, co-sponsored by SCCD and the Green River Valley Cattleman's Association had over 80 people in attendance. The meeting provided a platform for education and a way to field questions from the public regarding Brucellosis concerns in Sublette County as well as across Western Wyoming. The meeting began with a report from the State Vet, Jim Logan. APHIS then covered the history of testing and which tests are available today and why. Representatives from the Wyoming State Livestock Board provided an update report on rules and regulations involving brucellosis and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department provided information on their current testing of elk and bison in Wyoming. This meeting provided an avenue for everyone to respectfully ask questions and bring concerns about operations this upcoming season to a knowledgeable panel of professionals. The hope is that public meetings like this can bring ag producers and agencies together and open up lines of communication as we continue to work through complex and evolving issues like Brucellosis.

# Conservation Conversations

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## Community Education Success!

Jessica Artz, Range Specialist/Education & Outreach Coordinator

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The Sublette County Conservation District and Sublette BOCES partnered during the month of February to put on a four-week educational series called “Conservation Conversations”. Each hour-long session took place over the lunch hour and focused on a variety of natural resource related topics relevant to community members in Sublette County.

In week one, attendees learned about the history of the Sublette County Conservation District and the natural resource programs and projects that the District is involved with. The second part of the session dove into the diverse world of rangeland management in Sublette County and discussed how current monitoring benefits various users of rangelands while at the same time

promoting overall ecosystem and watershed health. Other discussions throughout the month covered topics related to the projects and policy surrounding big game migration corridors in Sublette County, the current status of water quality in Sublette County, threats to water quality, and how the Conservation District



is monitoring the health of these resources, as well as the do's and don'ts of planting trees in a tough climate.

This four-week series was well attended with around 20-30 people participating each week. SCCD believes public outreach and education are extremely important. We have a very diverse group of constituents and work with a variety of people in the community that all have different educational needs. If there is a topic of interest that you would like to see covered during future events like this, please contact us!

# One Rock at a Time:

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## Slowing Rangeland Erosion

Melanie Purcell, Wildlife & Habitat Program Manager

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“Whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting”! This old adage is a reference to the value of water, which has been at the center of many disputes throughout history. While Sublette County is fortunate to have an abundant supply as it sits at a headwaters, it is also susceptible to major run-off events that can further degrade small streams and meadows already affected by land use activities that have lowered water tables and contributed to erosion. These mesic areas are a vital habitat component of semi-arid sagebrush ecosystems and are essential to countless wildlife species and to ranchers for sustaining livestock operations.

SCCD recognizes that landowners are the conservation stewards of working landscapes so we want to provide you with the tools to adopt low-tech, low-cost mesic habitat restoration techniques. We are collaborating with partners to launch a project dubbed ‘One Rock at a Time: Slowing Rangeland Erosion’ to promote these methods which are becoming recognized as an efficient way to improve mesic systems by helping to retain water, reduce erosion, increase soil moisture and vegetation production, subsequently keeping water on the land longer and providing run-off later into the year. This is not a new technology, but rather a back to basics approach offering a variety of simple, cost-effective, hand-built restoration structures made of wood, mud, and rocks.

We are currently scouting potential project locations that could benefit from these structures. Perhaps you have something in mind! Maybe it’s an old ephemeral drainage that rarely holds water, a headcut that needs stabilized on your small perennial stream, a meadow that is drying and eroding, or some other spot that could use a little enhancement. Now, go ahead and enjoy that sip of whiskey and give us a call! See page 8 for more information from NRCS.



# SCCD is Hiring!

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## Surface Water Program Manager

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**Position Description:** Surface Water Program Manager will work closely with state and federal agencies and private landowners to collect chemical and biological data that will aid in management and understanding of water quality and health within Sublette County.

**Time Period:** Permanent full-time year-round position

**Compensation:** Salary Range: \$43,251 to \$62,145 per year depending upon qualifications and experience.

**Benefit package includes:** Retirement (Wyoming Retirement System), Health Insurance, Dental Insurance (optional), Vision Insurance, Paid Holidays, Vacation & Sick Leave

**Application screening begins April 17, 2020.** Screening continues until a suitable candidate is hired. For more information contact Michael Henn at 307-367-2364. Submit letter of interest, resume, and two (2) letters of reference to mhenn@sublettecd.com or PO Box 647, Pinedale, WY 82941

To view the full job description and qualifications please visit [sublettecd.com](http://sublettecd.com)



# 2020 Arbor Day Tree Pick!

## Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster acutifolia*

Cotoneaster is a rapidly growing shrub, within the rose family, with colorful fall foliage, flowers and berries that attract birds. This shrub grows well in Sublette County without becoming invasive because it is cold hardy and tolerates a variety of soils. Cotoneaster is also known as Peking Cotoneaster and is native to China. SCCD will be distributing Cotoneaster seedlings to Sublette County schools during our educational Arbor day event this year.



**Leaves:** Dark green, glossy, 1-2 inches long with smooth edges.

**Flowers, fruit:** Little cup shaped pinkish-white flowers bloom in small clusters. Blackish to reddish fruit.

**Bark:** reddish brown, new growth is smooth, turns scaly and rough with age.

**Growth form:** ovoid to irregular

**Crown density:** dense

**Drought resistance:** very good

**Cold hardiness:** excellent

**Soil considerations:** good alkaline tolerant

**Size:** 5-8 ft. tall / 3-5 ft. wide

**Elevation:** up to 9,500 ft.



# NRCS Update

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## Low-Tech Process Based Restoration Structures

*(structures aimed at reducing erosion in rangelands and in rivers)*

Jennifer Hayward, District Conservationist, Pinedale

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What did you say? I know, it's a mouthful but it's basically a process which mimics natural water behavior on the landscape to address erosion issues both in ephemeral and perennial stream systems. In uplands, where you see areas that have down-cut or are eroded in drainages, there are some easy to implement solutions that don't cost a lot of money, don't require extensive engineering work and use the natural materials located in the vicinity. In general, we are talking about rock bowls to dissipate erosive energy and as water is slowed, sediment drops out and builds soil back up the area of degradation. A series of these "checks" in a system can begin the healing process and slow down erosion which keeps water on our rangelands instead of allowing water and soil to leave these sites. Watch for upcoming workshops and information on this old technology that is being re-introduced across the West.

When looking at perennial stream systems, nature's engineers are the beaver. Love them or hate them, they have their place in slowing water and building up sediment that can stop erosional processes. These structures use native materials such as willow cuttings, rock, sod pieces and are meant to be installed as temporary measures to slow erosion. Many of these structures can be placed in tandem and they aren't meant to last forever, they are meant to mimic the slowing, pooling of water, build up soil and perhaps even to entice the beavers to move in and really make a dam that can withstand larger flow events. Some amazing stories from producers have occurred indicating that the introduction of these structures higher up in the watershed have increased the flow of streams on their private lands 4-6 weeks longer than before.

If interested, we want to talk! Reach out to the Conservation District, NRCS or Game and Fish staff to begin discussions and to evaluate the potential of your landscape for these practices. See page 5 for more information from SCCD.



# NRCS Update Cont...

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## USDA Services for Farms/Ranches

Jennifer Hayward, District Conservationist, Pinedale

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In times of change, each of us employ different coping strategies to handle the unknown. I am thankful that we live in Wyoming and I am thankful for the job that the agriculture industry continues to produce the food and fiber that is essential to daily life. It is my hope that on the other side of the current pandemic, that all those who live in our country recognize the importance of American Agriculture and place a high value on food produced within our country.

I have been asked many times what and how farmers and ranchers can access potential financial assistance from the federal government during this crisis and unknown yet impact on financial markets. The best place to get information is located at this website: <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus>

Scroll down to Updates on Programs and Services and there will be information, as it becomes available, and as leaders and agencies begin to implement the CARES Act. I would recommend checking here weekly. If posts are provided that are specific to a certain agency, then you can contact that local agency with questions.

Another option is to sign up for Gov Delivery for NRCS and the Farm Service Agency. This will provide updates as either emails or text messages. You can select which subscriptions you are interested in receiving and how often they are delivered. You can also manage your subscriptions or unsubscribe if you wish to do so.

NRCS: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDANRCS/subscriber/new>  
FSA: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFSA/subscriber/new>

The NRCS office is open and staff are currently available to conduct business by phone and other electronic means of communications. We can still conduct field visits with appropriate mitigation measures. As always, we encourage landowners to plan for the future and invest in your natural resources with conservation in mind. If you haven't worked with NRCS to develop a conservation plan and inventory your operation, contact us to set up a meeting to discuss opportunities and how we may be able to assist you in achieving your conservation goals. It truly is a privilege to service American Ranchers!

# Happy World Soil Day!

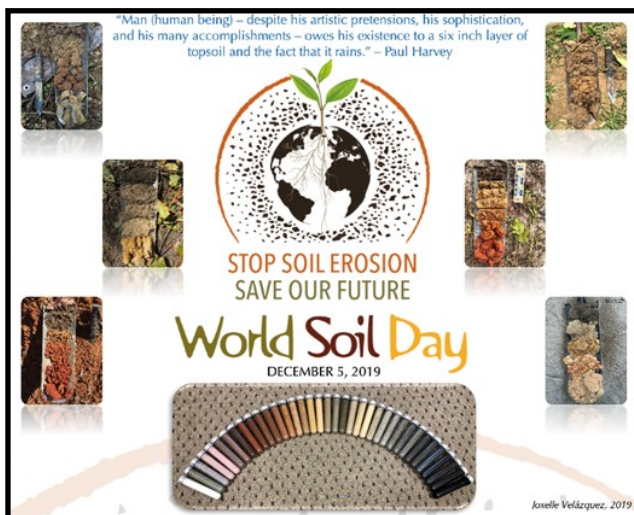
Autmn Boxum & Taylor Kepley : Soil Scientist's USDA-NRCS



Every year on December 5<sup>th</sup> people around the world celebrate World Soil Day and this year's theme was "Stop soil erosion, save our future." World Soil Day was created in 2014 by the United Nations to create more awareness about soil health, erosion, and sustainable soil management. December 5<sup>th</sup> was chosen as the celebratory day because it is also the birthday of the former King of Thailand, Bhumibol Adulyadej, who was an advocate

for soil health. World soil day celebrations include new NRCS articles, workshops, and some even enjoy tasty soil-themed treats!

Soil health is important on our rangelands for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, resistance to drought, invasive species, and soil erosion. Proper soil management can lead to improved plant production/reproduction, water retention/quality, and carbon sequestration. These all contribute to better rangeland health for the benefit of all. Some common visual indicators of soil erosion on rangelands include bare ground, exposed roots, pedestaled plants, reduced plant growth, gullies, rills, and sediment in streams. If you have any questions or concerns about the soil health or erosion on your property contact the local NRCS office here in Pinedale.



# Kid's Corner

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Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

## Farm Animals Anagram



**Hidden Word**  
(solve the circled letters):

\_\_\_\_\_

seroh \_\_\_\_\_

act \_\_\_\_\_

tosreor \_\_\_\_\_

kondey \_\_\_\_\_

udck \_\_\_\_\_

ogd \_\_\_\_\_

nekcih \_\_\_\_\_

oaf \_\_\_\_\_

claf \_\_\_\_\_

blam \_\_\_\_\_

lulb \_\_\_\_\_

neh \_\_\_\_\_



Find us on Facebook!

# Who Are We?

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## **Sublette County Conservation District Board of Supervisors**

Coke Landers-Chairman

Darrell Walker-Vice Chairman

Dave Pape-Sec/Treasurer

Meghann Smith

Milford Lockwood

## **Sublette County Conservation District Staff**

Michael Henn, District Manager

Sno Ann Engler, Office Manager

Melanie Purcell, Wildlife & Habitat Program Manager

Shari Meeks, Range Program Manager

Jessica Artz, Range Specialist/ Education & Outreach Coordinator

Bradley Blackwell, Surface Water Program Manager

Arley Anderson, Ecological Site Inventory Team Lead

## **Partners: USDA / NRCS Staff**

Jennifer Hayward, District Conservationist, Shirleena King, Administrative Assistant

Karen Clause, Multi-County Range Management Specialist

Bryan Christensen, Ecological Site Specialist

Dan Perkins, Dillon Gray, Autumn Boxum, Taylor Kepley, Soil Survey Team

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