

The Mountain Meadow

January 2024

Sublette County
Conservation District

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Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow!

A quarterly publication from the Sublette
County Conservation District.

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



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What We've Been Up To From the District Manager's Chair

Well, 2023 is finally over. What a year, started off with a great winter, cold and wet spring followed by only a couple weeks of hot weather. Then haying season started and that drug on until October for some with rain delays and equipment breakdowns. Then talk about a beautiful fall and "winter" so far. Just today staff mentioned that it feels like a May day in December.

In November, SCCD Board and staff traveled to our state convention in Dubois. There conservation districts from around the state converged to discuss topics affecting districts. At the convention SCCD was well represented with Traci Berg receiving Area V Outstanding Employee of the Year. Melanie Purcell was recognized for 15 years of service as a conservation district employee. Traci Berg, Shari Meeks, and Melanie Purcell receiving certificates from conservation district employee training. Adrienne Kirkwood received a certificate in passing the water quality training program. Darrell Walker was present to hand out the Darrell Walker Outstanding Supervisor Award to fellow Sweetwater County Conservation District Board Supervisor Tom Burris. Finally, I received the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts Outstanding Employee Award.

As we look forward to what 2024 will bring we hope you and your families had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all the staff and Board and SCCD!!





NRCS Update

Check Out Pinedale's New District Conservationist!

Simon Teaff, NRCS District Conservationist



Hello,

My name is Simon Teaff. I am the new District Conservationist for the Pinedale NRCS field office. Many of you may be familiar with my predecessor, Jennifer Hayward, who is now an Easement Coordinator for Wyoming NRCS. Eric Watson, DC for the Lander and Riverton field offices has been acting DC for Pinedale in the interim. I would like to thank Jason LeVan, Pinedale NRCS Range Specialist, for doing an outstanding job taking up the slack and keeping everything running smoothly over the past year.

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A little bit about myself...

I was born in raised in Texas along with my twin brother Sammy. We grew up in the Arlington area and attended high school at Arlington High. I attended Tarleton State University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Range Management as well as commissioning as a 2nd Lieutenant, branched Aviation, in the Texas Army National Guard in 2009. I began my career with the NRCS in 2009 at the Throckmorton, TX field office as a GS7 planner. Back then, after one year we were required to relocate for our GS9 promotion, so I was transferred to Hamilton, TX. I worked in that office for 6 months and then received orders to attend flight school at Fort Rucker, AL. I graduated with honors in 2012 as an AH-64D Apache pilot and resumed my duties with the NRCS in Hamilton while simultaneously drilling with the 1-149th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion in Houston, TX. In 2020 I accepted a job in Chama, NM with the NRCS and spent a year and a half there before returning to Texas, where I was the District Conservationist for the Gatesville field office. My official start date for Wyoming was October 23rd so Jason is still trying to get me broken in but so far it's been great meeting all of our producers and partners. I enjoy hunting, fishing and working on old vehicles. Jason and I look forward to continuing to meet new producers and working with our partners in conservation. You can reach us here at the office at 307-367-2257 or my email is simon.teaff@usda.gov



The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation



Melanie Purcell, SCCD Wildlife & Habitat Program Manager



The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is a set of seven principles that has led to the functioning and successes of wildlife conservation and management in the United States and Canada. Though as with many things, as times, values and society changes, questions arise to the validity of certain components and what, if anything, should change to meet future societal values. The basis of these key principles and an introduction to some challenges are presented below.

1. Wildlife Resources Are a Public Trust. This was formed around the concept that wildlife is owned by no one and is held in trust for the benefit of present and future generations. A Supreme Court decision in 1842 declared certain resources could not be taken into private ownership. Ownership of a wild animal occurred only when it was physically possessed, commonly when killed for food.

2. Markets for Game Are Eliminated. Unregulated trafficking of meat, hides, and other parts of wildlife in the 19th century with led to severe population declines. Elimination of markets for game animals and nongame birds was an essential step in halting declines.

3. Allocation of Wildlife Is by Law. Equal access to wildlife is insured through public input and the democratic process. Clearly defined laws exist regarding seasons, bag limits, methods of take, and areas. What is not clearly defined is the applied enforcement of these laws, which often depend on available resources and societal desires/values.



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4. Wildlife Can Be Killed Only for a Legitimate Purpose. This relates to the concepts of sportsmanship meaning "1) does so primarily for the pursuit or chase; 2) affords game a "sporting" chance (fair chase); 3) seeks knowledge of nature and the habitats of animals; 4) derives no financial profit from game killed; 5) will inflict no unnecessary pain or suffering on game; and 6) will not waste any game that is killed".

5. Wildlife Is Considered an International Resource. Some animals like many migratory birds move across international boundaries. Thus, management in one place could have consequences to its neighbors making it possible for international commerce to have significant effects on the status of a species.

6. Science Is the Proper Tool to Discharge Wildlife Policy. Science as a base for informed decision making in wildlife management has become standard in Canada and the U.S. Nevertheless, funding has been inadequate to meet the research needs of management agencies, and a trend toward greater political influence in decision-making threatens this principle.

7. Democracy of Hunting Is Standard. Theodore Roosevelt believed that access for all to have the opportunity to hunt would result in many societal benefits. Aldo Leopold termed this "democracy of sport". This sets us apart from other nations that do not have public resources.

Challenges to these premises encompass things such as ownership claims of wildlife, unregulated commercial sale of wildlife or wildlife parts, land ownership impacts, animal-rights doctrines, international relationships, economies, cultures, and more. For example, are animals held in a fence enclosure a trust resource or are they private property? Is there a distinction between an animal jumping a fence onto private land and an animal kept in an enclosure and husbanded via traditional livestock practices? How might the construction of the wall between US and Mexico impact wildlife? How might various groups have influence on societal norms, such as animal-rights organizations that are working to shift the political debate to exclude hunting? How might a change in gun rights hinder participation in hunting?

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Wildlife management appears to be increasingly politicized. Social and biological sciences must be integrated to meet conservation needs in the 21st century. Without the political, social, and financial support of hunters and anglers, agencies will be challenged in delivering effective conservation programs for wildlife in the future. The Model's future rests on the adaptability and application of its principles to current wildlife conservation needs. It must be viewed as a dynamic set of principles that can adapt. It will be important to foster landscapes that can sustain populations of wildlife for conservation of biodiversity and human use and enjoyment.

As Leopold wrote (Meine 1988:359-360): "One of the anomalies of modern ecology is the creation of two groups, each of which seems barely aware of the existence of the other. The one studies the human community, almost as if it were a separate entity, and calls its findings sociology, economics and history. The other studies the plant and animal community and comfortably relegates the hodge-podge of politics to the liberal arts. The inevitable fusion of these two lines of thought will, perhaps, constitute the outstanding advance of this century."

If you want to read about this further, see: <https://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/North-American-model-of-Wildlife-Conservation.pdf>



WDCA - Technical Services

"Beyond the Weather"

Written by Lucy Pauley, Wyoming Department of Agriculture
Submitted by Justin Caudill, Wyoming Department of Agriculture

This fall, the Wyoming Department of Agriculture signed an MOU with the Montana Department of Agriculture to collaborate on the "Beyond the Weather" mental health campaign. This initiative, designed to destigmatize mental health challenges within the ag industry, encourages us to get "Beyond the Weather" with our friends and neighbors. The WDA will now be able to leverage the successful "Beyond the Weather" campaign and creative assets that have been active and dynamic in Montana for nearly two years.

To engage farmers and ranchers throughout the state, we are also partnering with the Northern Ag Network. This collaboration will include radio advertisements, digital outreach, and social media campaigns, ensuring the "Beyond the Weather" message resonates with the agricultural community.

To access more information, resources, and support, please visit beyondtheweather.com. If you'd like any materials to help address ag stress in your community, please let me know.



Protecting Watersheds Sustains Habitats

Adrienne Kirkwood, SCCD Water Resources Specialist



Does it seem like it is just not snowing this year? Have you noticed other changes in precipitation amounts and timing in Sublette County? Would you be interested in participating in a nationwide weather reporting system? Have you ever heard of CoCoRaHS?

CoCoRaHS is an acronym for the Community Collaborative Rain, Snow, & Hail Network. CoCoRaHS is a non-profit, community-based network of volunteers that report local weather observations focused on precipitation. This non-profit organization started in Colorado after a 1997 flood devastated Fort Collins. Available weather reports at the time did not indicate that storm damage and flooding would be as extensive as it was. Due to regional variability of weather patterns, the forecasts did not adequately prepare residents and town officials for the potential severity of the storm. After sustaining millions of dollars' worth of damage and loss of life, organizers wanted better access to data that could help to pinpoint and report potential local impacts from severe weather. In 2010 CoCORaHS became a nationwide effort receiving observations from all fifty states and has since also reached international status. CoCoRaHS is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary this year.

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Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to participate in this program. The CoCoRaHS organization provides educational training on how to collect precipitation, make observations, and report findings. Four organizational goals according to the CoCoRaHS mission statement include: 1) Providing accurate high-quality precipitation data to the many end users on a timely basis; 2) Increasing the density of precipitation data available throughout the country by encouraging volunteer weather observing; 3) Encouraging citizens to have fun participating in meteorological science and heightening their awareness about weather; 4) Providing enrichment activities in water and weather resources for teachers, educators, and the community. Data collected through CoCoRaHS is used by a wide variety of user groups such as: The National Weather Service, meteorologists, hydrologists, natural resource managers, farmers, ranchers, engineers, and teachers just to name a few. Figure 1 shows an example of observation data posted on the CoCoRaHS website on December 14, 2023.

Interested groups are required to fill out an application form, found on the CoCoRaHS website. One of the requirements for collecting precipitation data is to utilize a 4" diameter rain gauge, in which details and links are provided on the website on how to obtain low-cost equipment. Participants will go through a training session, then start submitting daily observations through an interactive website. This community-based opportunity could be attractive to school classrooms, senior groups or any residents wanting to learn more about weather and to participate in a nation-wide observation program.

To find more information, visit the CoCoRaHS website at <https://www.cocorahs.org>, the Wyoming State CoCoRaHS coordinator Tony Bergantino through the University of Wyoming antonius@uwyo.edu, or The West-Central Wyoming regional coordinators: Geri Swanson geri.swanson@noaa.gov or Brett McDonald brett.mcdonald@noaa.gov of the National Weather Service office serving Big Horn, Fremont, Hot Springs, Johnson, Lincoln, Natrona, Park, Sublette, Sweetwater, Teton, and Washakie counties.

"Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network." CoCoRaHS, www.cocorahs.org/. Accessed 18 Dec. 2023.

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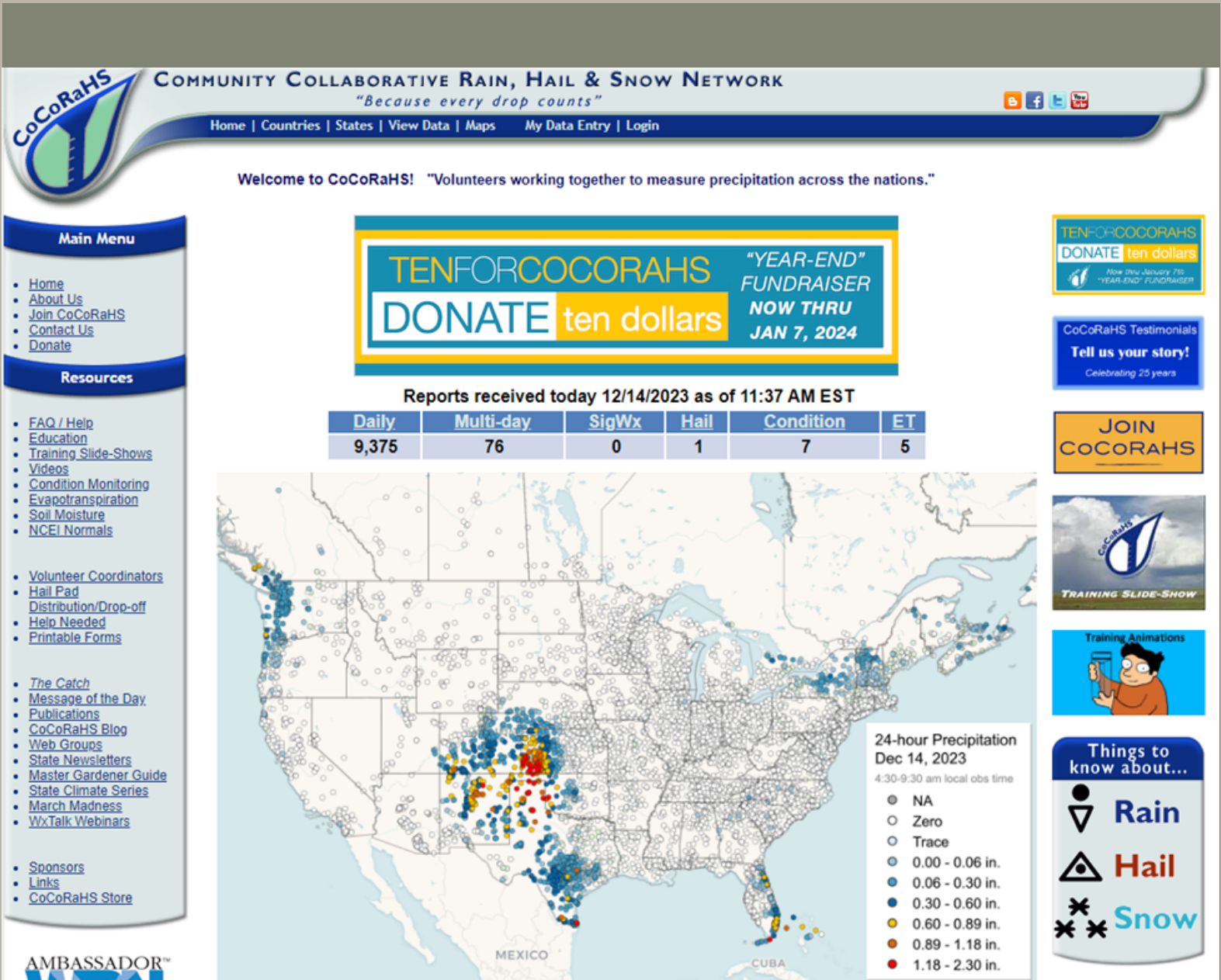


Figure 1. Weather Observation Report from CoCoRaHS website, December 14, 2023. "Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network." CoCoRaHS, www.cocorahs.org/Maps/ViewMap.aspx?state=usa. Accessed 14 Dec. 2023.



Click the button below to watch the recording of the Vence Open House

Vence Open House



Natural Resource Technician- Timber/Fuels

Sublette County Conservation District-located in Pinedale, WY

Do you have an interest in a holistic approach to natural resource management? If so, join an interdisciplinary team to aid in monitoring and managing forested lands throughout Sublette County, WY!



The Sublette County Conservation District (SCCD) aims to promote and maintain healthy rangelands, clean water and air and maintain premier wildlife and habitat. The SCCD Natural Resource Technician will work closely with local, state, federal agencies, and private landowners to promote forest health through forest management, restoration, and landscape level-based projects.

GENERAL DUTIES:

- Follows the plans and directives of SCCD to protect water quality, soils, livestock, wildlife, and range.
- Work with landowners and land managers to manage forested lands by:
 - Prepping projects for implementation
 - Planning and designing projects.
 - Project layout
 - Quantifying product within a project area.
- Work in the field in all types of weather and terrain.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Working towards a forest management degree or other natural resource related degree path.
- Wildland Firefighter Type 2 certification or the ability to obtain the certification at the arduous level.
- Knowledge and experience with terrestrial and aquatic community interaction, including an understanding of multiple-use and its influence on watershed health and function.
- Knowledge of plant ID in forested ecosystems.
- Knowledge of ArcGIS or similar programs.
- Excellent written and verbal skills. Ability to work independently and with self-initiative, while having a keen sense of when to ask questions and seek input.
- Computer, software, and technological knowledge and skills expected of natural resource professionals.
- Enthusiastic about promoting sustainable natural resource management and being a part of a dynamic team of conservation-minded individuals.

Seasonal position up to 11 weeks. May through August

Salary Range: \$20.00 per hour.

Benefit package includes: Paid Holidays

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS STARTS January 22, 2024.

For more information contact Michael Henn at 307-367-2364

Complete applications must include a letter of interest, resume, along with two (2) professional references submitted to mhenn@sublettecd.com or PO Box 647, Pinedale, WY 82941. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Learn about the Sublette County Conservation District at www.sublettecd.com

Learn about the area at www.pinedaleonline.com

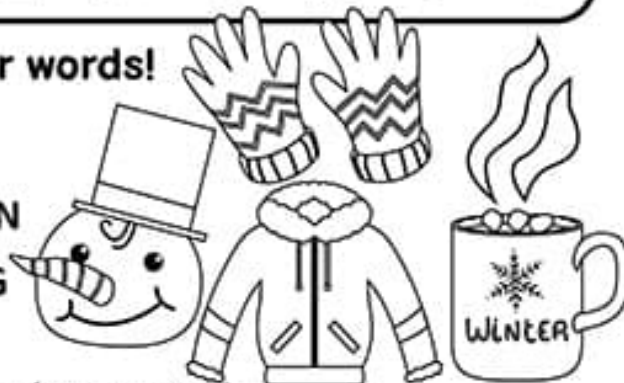
Kid's Corner

 **winter**   
WORD SEARCH

R	L	B	H	A	T	I	B	K	G
S	P	L	O	Q	C	H	S	X	D
L	T	F	T	P	O	S	N	H	R
E	Y	O	C	V	A	V	O	A	V
D	V	W	O	P	T	P	W	P	H
D	O	I	C	Q	L	V	M	S	C
I	S	N	O	W	F	L	A	K	E
N	Y	T	A	G	G	K	N	Z	N
G	A	E	L	G	L	O	V	E	S
G	O	R	U	L	S	Y	A	O	T

Search for these winter words!

- COAT 
- HOT COCOA
- SNOWFLAKE
- HAT
- WINTER
- SNOWMAN
- SLEDDING
- GLOVES



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Who Are We?



Find us on Facebook!

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
Traci Berg, Administrative Coordinator
Melanie Purcell, Wildlife & Habitat Program Manager
Shari Meeks, Range Program Manager
Adrienne Kirkwood, Water Resource Specialist
Justice Miller, Rangeland Specialist
Keller Hyde, Rangeland Technician
Kamryn Kozisek, Natural Resource Technician Senior

Partners: USDA/NRCS Staff

Simon Teaff, District Conservationist
Jason LeVan, Rangeland Management Specialist
Joey Galanti, Ecological Site Specialist
Dillon Gray, Autumn Boxum, Taylor Kepley, Jenna Platt-Soil Survey Team



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