

July, 2021



## The Mountain Meadow

A quarterly publication from the  
Sublette County Conservation District



Cooperative monitoring is in full swing this field season as we help to complete a variety of projects across the BTNF!

## Highlights In This Issue

- BLM Disturbance Inventory
- Drought in Sublette County
- What is CSP?
- One Rock at a Time Workshop
- Bee Friendly to Pollinators
- E.coli Sampling

One Rock at a Time: Slowing Rangeland Erosion Workshop happening in August! See Flyer on page 8 for more details.

*"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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Can you believe its already July? Time has flown by as always. Sublette County is dealing with drought conditions causing issues with pasture, hay fields, lawns, and gardens. With no real moisture in the future as I write this article, one can only hope for moisture and no fires to start within our County. I urge everyone to be careful when working or playing outdoors, it will not be too long before even a spark from a horse shoe on the trail could start a fire.

On a lighter note, the District just got done hosting our annual Spring Expo on June 19<sup>th</sup>. It was a huge success drawing over 360 people come through the doors to browse through the vendors and listen to the educational speakers talk about gardening at high elevations. We gave away several door prizes to attendees. Chicken poop bingo was a success again this year generating \$98 to the Sublette County 4-H Foundation!

The District is also offering a mesic low-tech habitat workshop this August please take a look at the flyer later in the newsletter for more information. If you have any needs regarding natural resources don't forget to swing by the office or give us a call.



# What We've Been up to

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## BLM Disturbance Inventory

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SCCD completed an inventory on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in the Southern end of the county in June. This project focused on obtaining an understanding of the ecological condition and function of re-claimed/disturbed plant communities related to oil and

gas disturbance within the boundaries of the North La Barge Common Allotment. The data collected can help inform future BLM decisions within the project area. At each site SCCD collected annual plant production, species diversity, species composition and canopy gaps in vegetation (which can provide information on susceptibility to invasive weeds).

*See You at the Fair!*

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SCCD staff have been busy putting together education materials and activities related to wildlife migration, wildlife friendly fence modifications and other ongoing projects within the county. There will be information regarding available grants/funding opportunities offered through a variety of programs here at SCCD.

There will be a wildlife tracks and migration activity for the youth that stop by our booth and lots of great information regarding on the ground efforts to improve fencing, habitat and overall rangeland health across Sublette County. Stop by and see us at the SCCD booth across from the free stage!

**Wednesday, July 28th 1pm-6pm**

**Thursday, July 29th 10am-6pm**

**Friday, July 30th 10am-6pm**

**Saturday, July 31st 10am-6pm**



# Drought in Sublette County

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Shari Meeks, Range Program Manager

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Drought. It's a word that makes every person cringe. But it's very real this year, just as it was in 2012 and years prior. This year, we saw the desert portions of Sublette County

start to cure several weeks ahead of normal. Grasses shot up seed heads early, indicating that they were stressed due to lack of soil moisture...a lingering impact of a dry fall and reduced winter snow-fall. Many trusty reservoirs were found empty and several springs in our mountains did not flow this year. The warm temperatures and wind evaporated what little rain we have seen.

You are likely already aware of all these things, but it is important to understand that our surrounding plant communities are stressed under these conditions. However, there are definitely ways that we, as humans, can reduce additional stressors on our natural resources during these drought scenarios. The first thing we can do is be prepared and implement best management practices for whatever activities we engage in that require natural resources.

Being prepared for drought conditions will help to set up Sublette County for resiliency. So no matter if you are an avid recreationist, agriculture producer, or town resident, you can help ease the impact of drought on our communities.

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In an effort to help you prepare for and endure drought, the Wyoming Condition Monitoring Team has built a website ([drought.wyo.gov](http://drought.wyo.gov)) full of many useful resources that may be of interest to you as you look to steward not only your property, but the lands that make up Sublette County.

The Wyoming Condition Monitoring Team (WCMT) is a collaborative effort of state, tribal, and federal partners that formed in June 2020 in response to an emerging drought. The WCMT corresponds weekly to draft and submit recommendations to the U.S. Drought Monitor on behalf of Wyoming, started offering a monthly webinar for public servants in March 2021-- which is recorded and posted for the public viewing, and manages this Drought Information & Resources website for the people of Wyoming.

We encourage all residents and visitors educate themselves about the effects of drought and to minimize your impact to the land as we endure drought together. Be wise about your activities and we will all get through this together. Have a happy and safe summer!

**Website:** [drought.wyo.gov](http://drought.wyo.gov)

**Other helpful resources:**

Water Resources Data System (UWYO)

<http://www.wrds.uwyo.edu/drought/drought.html>

Bridger-Teton National Forest (for fire danger, alerts & notices)

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/btnf/home>

Wyoming Bureau of Land Management (fire restrictions)

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/public-safety-and-fire/wyoming/fire>

# NRCS Update

## What is CSP?

Janessa Julson, Acting District Conservationist

Hi! My name is Janessa Julson, and I was hired as a Rangeland Management Specialist for the Afton NRCS Field Office in Sept 2018. I am originally from eastern Utah but came to Wyoming from northern Idaho. I was raised on a family owned/operated cattle and sheep ranch and studied range management at both Utah State University (bachelor's degree) and University of Idaho (master's degree). My husband (who is involved in wildland fire and forestry), little boy (1 year old), and two rowdy dogs keep me busy during my free time. I am excited to be serving in this temporary position and learning about different projects here in Sublette County.

The NRCS Rocky Mountain Area Office has asked for more participation with the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). What is CSP? Here's a summary of the CSP program that Wyoming NRCS offers and the link with more information for any of those who might be interested <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wy/programs/financial/csp/>

**Conservation Stewardship Program** for Livestock Producers



**CSP Enhancements to assist Livestock Producers** (This is not an exhaustive list.)

### Livestock Feed and Pasture

- Manage Livestock Access to Water
- Grazing Management to Improve Wildlife Habitat
- Managing Calving Cycle Enhancements
- Grazing Monitoring Enhancements

### Natural Resources, Biodiversity & Buffers

- Conservation Cover Planting
- Range Planting
- Herbaceous Weed Control
- Riparian Buffer
- Stockpile Cool Season Forage

### Nutrient and Pest Management

- Integrated Pest Management
- Biological Suppression of Brush, Weeds and Invasive Species
- Precision Pesticide Application
- Herbaceous Weed Control
- Prescribed Burning

### Wildlife

- Conservation Cover Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Pollinator and Beneficial Insect Habitat
- Tree Planting for Wildlife Food and Cover
- Wildlife Friendly Fencing

# NRCS Update Cont..

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## Conservation Stewardship Program

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The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation. Whether you are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop resiliency, or develop wildlife habitat, we can custom design a CSP plan to help you meet those goals. We can help you identify natural resource problems in your operation and provide technical and financial assistance to solve those problems or attain higher stewardship levels in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. For example, we can look at ways to address the amount of soil lost; mitigate the impact of excess water; reduce the contribution of agricultural operations to airborne soil particles and greenhouse gas emissions; improve the cover, food, and water available for domestic and wildlife species; or promote energy efficiencies for on-farm activities. If you are already taking steps to improve the condition of the land, chances are CSP can help you find new ways to meet your goals.

### Benefits

CSP is for working lands. It is the largest conservation program in the United States. Thousands of people voluntarily enroll in the program because it helps them enhance natural resources and improve their business operation.

CSP participants are seeing real results. Some of these benefits include:

Enhanced resiliency to weather and market volatility

Decreased need for agricultural inputs

Improved wildlife habitat conditions

Contact your local NRCS Field Office for more information or to sign-up today!

# One Rock At A Time: Slowing Rangeland Erosion

**VIRTUAL CLASSROOM SESSION AUGUST 4<sup>TH</sup>!**  
**JOIN US IN PINEDALE AUGUST 11<sup>TH</sup> – 13<sup>TH</sup>!**

Objective: Economically restore wet meadow habitats in sagebrush rangelands to benefit wildlife and livestock on working lands.

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

### AUGUST 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

→ **Introduction to Low-Tech Wet Meadow Restoration Webinar for Land Managers & Partners**

Hosted by: NRCS, Intermountain West Joint Venture

A virtual opportunity that will provide theory and basic instruction to lay a good foundation for the work on the ground the following week. Learn to recognize opportunities for low-tech "Zeedyk" structures (e.g., One Rock Dams, Zuni Bowls), and get introduced to beaver mimicry using Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA's).

Virtual registration link: <https://www.partnersinthesage.com/2021-zeedyk-wyoming-workshop>

\* Will be recorded for later viewing



### AUGUST 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

→ **Zeedyk Structure Building Workshop in the Field**

Hosted by: SCCD, NRCS, WGFD

Get on the ground to read a real landscape and learn the techniques and skills to build low-cost, low-tech stream restoration "Zeedyk" structures that will help curb erosion and stream degradation by catching sediment, raising the water table, and increasing vegetation productivity.

### AUGUST 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021

→ **Beaver Dam Analog Structure Building Workshop in the Field**

Hosted by: Wyoming TNC

Get on the ground in this final workshop session to learn how to use "beaver mimicry" techniques and build in-stream restorations that use the engineering benefits of beavers to help restore riparian health and functioning streams.



This project is made possible with funding support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. The USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer and Lender.

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

For more information or to reserve a spot contact:  
Melanie Purcell, Wildlife & Habitat Program Manager  
Sublette County Conservation District  
Phone #: 307-367-2364  
Email: [mpurcell@sublettecd.com](mailto:mpurcell@sublettecd.com)

OR

Kerry Gold, Habitat Mitigation Biologist  
Wyoming Game & Fish Department  
Phone #: 307-367-4352  
Email: [kerry.gold@wyo.gov](mailto:kerry.gold@wyo.gov)





# Bee Friendly to Pollinators

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Traci Berg, Administrative Coordinator

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Summer has finally reached our small community valley and bringing with it our urge to garden. As we start to break out of our own forms of hibernation, so do some of this seasons most important inhabitants, the pollinators. However, our pollinators need our help. Currently there are 8 species of bumble bees, 20 species of butterflies, and 28 species of hummingbirds placed on the endangered species list. Causes of this include pesticides, habitat loss and even climate change. This article includes the buzz on how to turn your back yard into a pollinator's paradise.

**Picking Out the Perfect Plants:** Pollinators are very important to future generations of plants and some trees. Without them spreading pollen from one plant to another the plants are unable to reproduce meaning no bees, no trees. One way to increase pollinators to find haven in your backyard is to pick pollinator friendly plants and trees. Always start with planting some native plants. Bees are attracted to bright white, yellow, and blue flowers. Hummingbirds prefer bright red, orange, and white flowers (note that the flower shape needs to be cup/funnel like). If you are wanting to attract butterflies, they prefer bright red and purple flowers. When planting put like flowers in groups. This increases the efficiency of the pollination be spread to the correct species of flowers. Also keep in mind to have plant species that bloom throughout the spring/summer so there is always food for pollinators available. Just like all other living things pollinators need water. Creating pollinator friendly water sources is easy. They should be shallow with floating plants and/or gradually sloped rocks to avoid drowning.



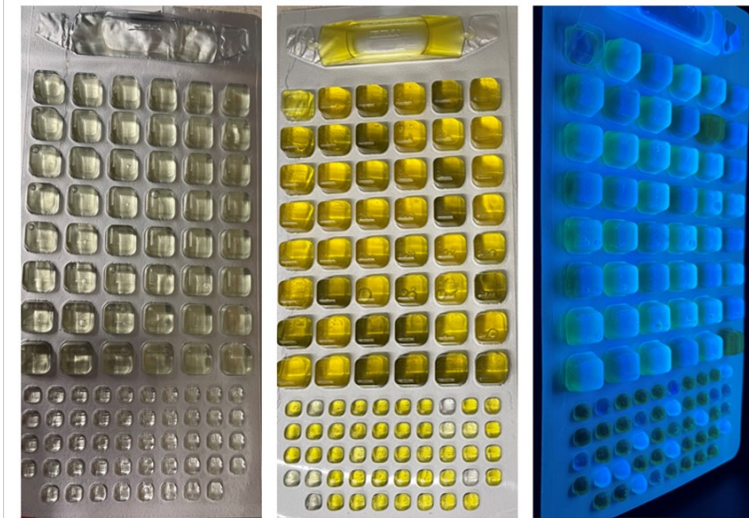
**Creating shelter for your backyard pollinators:** The easiest way to achieve that you are accommodating all species is to create different canopy layers with your planting. Change things up from different flower sizes with shrubs/bushes and incorporate different types of trees this increases pollinators abilities to avoid predators. Build bee hotels to encourage bees to nest in your backyard. Pollinating species of bees are usually solitary and are more docile than other varieties. Build a bee hotel by placing hollow tubes together so bees can be close but remain solitary.

For instructions on building your own bee hotel visit the following link: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/build-your-own-bee-hotel/#build-your-own-bee-hotel>.

# SCCD Water Lab Addition!

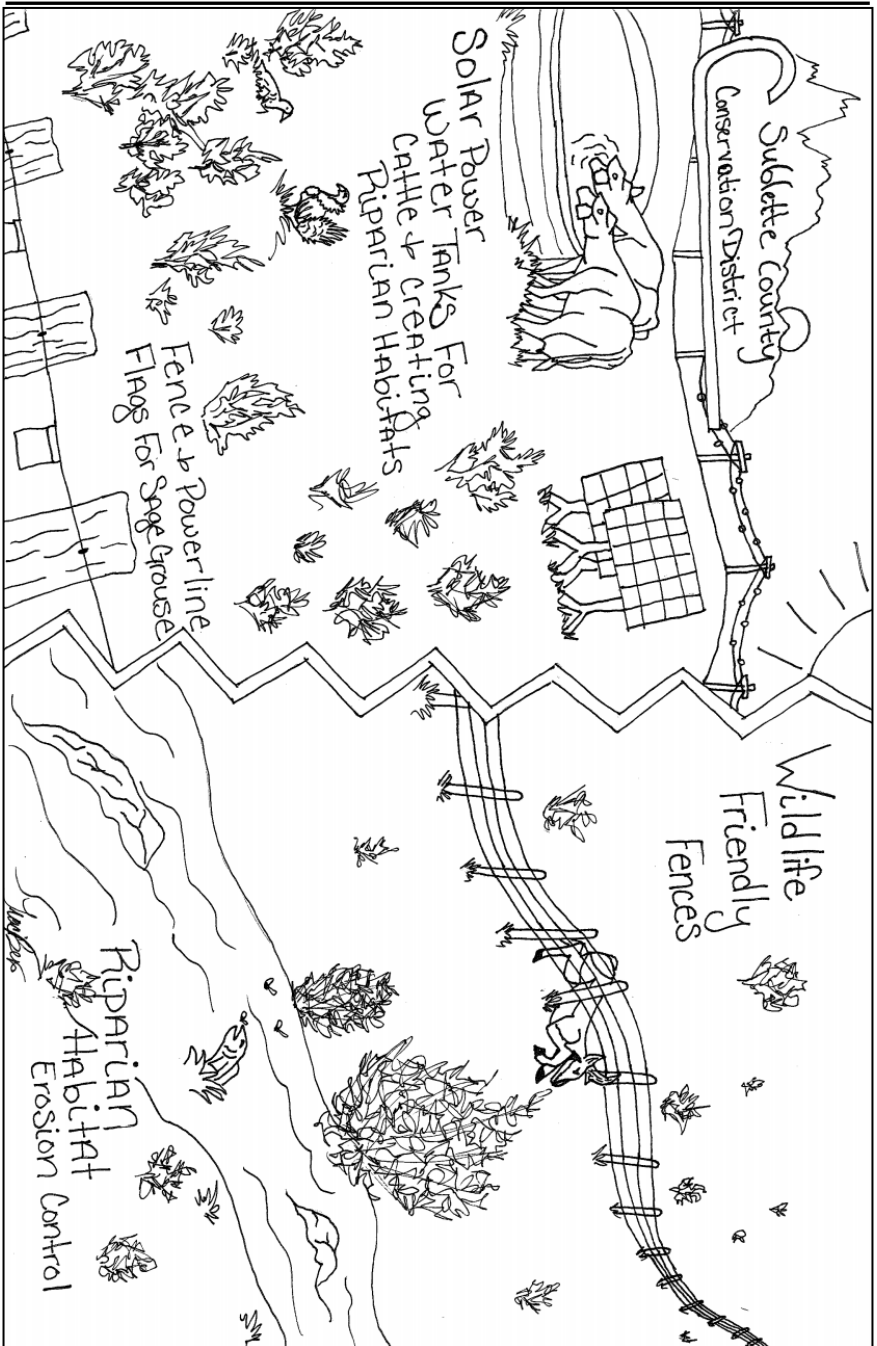
## E. coli Sampling & Analysis

Over the winter, the SCCD has sought after grant opportunities to expand our water quality sampling, monitoring, and analysis efforts. Because of those awarded grants, SCCD is now able to complete E. coli sampling in-house! E. coli is a bacterium that lives normally in healthy humans and animals. However, ingesting elevated levels of E. coli can cause diarrhea. In streams that meet Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality criteria for recreational uses (swimming and drinking), E. coli levels cannot exceed predetermined high levels. In our perennial systems, contributors of E. coli can be humans, pets, wildlife and livestock. It is important to monitor our streams because they cannot be disinfected, therefore all users can be impacted.



Total Coliform and E. coli bacteria are quantified using the Quanti-Tray/2000 method. Samples from the field are mixed with a reagent and then incubated. Coliform and E.coli's growth is stimulated while other bacterial growth is suppressed. The waste produced by these growing bacteria may turn yellow or fluoresce. To be considered positive for coliform bacteria (middle), a sample must be as yellow or more yellow than the "comparator" (left). Wells that are both yellow and fluoresce under ultraviolet light are positive for E. coli bacteria (right).

# Kid's Corner



# 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  
Traci Berg, Administrative Coordinator  
Melanie Purcell, Wildlife & Habitat Program Manager  
Shari Meeks, Range Program Manager  
Jessica Artz, Range Specialist/ Education & Outreach Coordinator  
Gabe Fancher, Natural Resource Technician  
Kacey Baldwin, Natural Resource Intern

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

Janessa Julson, Acting District Conservationist  
Jennifer Hayward, District Conservationist  
Shirleena King, Administrative Assistant  
Karen Clause, Multi-County Range Management Specialist  
Dillon Gray, Autumn Boxum, Taylor Kepley, Jenna Platt- Soil Survey Team

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