

October, 2019



The Mountain Meadow

A quarterly publication from the
Sublette County Conservation District



Photo by EcoFlight

Birds eye view of Burnt Lake and Boulder Lake (from the cockpit)

Highlights In This Issue

- Watershed Inventory
- Plant Spotlight
- NRCS Update
- A View From Above
- Healthy Rangelands
- Employee Spotlight

Almost Time To Order Trees For Spring Delivery!
Check out our website: www.sublettecd.com/tree-

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

From the District Manager's Chair

What's going on at the District

Mike Henn, District Manager



Hunting Season is here and the District is busy wrapping up the field season before Mother Nature says we are done, like it or not. The end of the summer and start of fall was a busy time for the District. We finished up surface water quality monitoring around the County which

included several continuous loggers that monitor water quality every 15 minutes giving the District a better understanding of daily fluctuations in the rivers. The wildlife program is busy finishing up some wildlife friendly fence modifications and starting a few more as long as fall will last. The range program is busy finishing all the cooperative monitoring as the cattle and sheep come off the summer range and onto their fall and winter pastures.

The District has also been busy this summer working with the Hoback Ranches Service Improvement District to stabilize the roads within Hoback Ranches as a result of the Roosevelt Fire. Work will continue through the fall until snow closes work for the year. Work will continue next spring as long as the funding for the grant we have lasts.

The first part of August I had the pleasure of representing Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts at the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) summer meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I was the representative to the public lands resource policy group. It was an interesting meeting to listen to how other states are addressing public lands policy concerns and projects in their respective states and how NACD incorporates everyone's voice into their policy.

I hope everyone has a chance to enjoy Sublette County in the fall and get out and about one last time before "Old Man Winter" shows up and covers the County in a white blanket of snow.

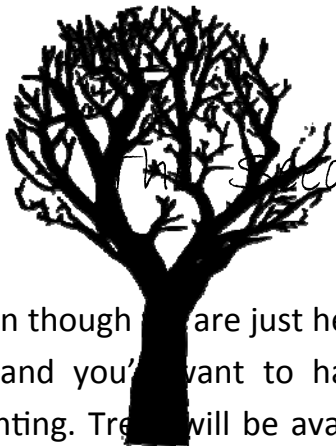
What We've Been up to

Area 5 Meeting



Conservation Districts across the state are divided into 5 regions. The SCCD is part of the Area V region. Consisting of Sublette, Uinta, Sweetwater, Teton, StarValley, Lincoln and Little Snake River. Sublette county hosted the Area V meeting this year at Kendell Valley Lodge. Participants include board members and staff. Wy Dept of Agriculture, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service and Wy Association of Conservation Districts (WACD).

The agenda covers issues shared in common and is a prelude to the November state wide convention held this year in Buffalo WY November 13-15, 2019.



The Seedling Tree Sale Is Upon Us!

Even though we are just heading into winter, spring will be here in no time at all and you'll want to have those seedling trees ordered and ready for planting. Trees will be available for pickup on April 30th and May 1st 2020. Current inventory includes 5 different species of bareroot stock; *Caragana*, *Cotoneaster*, *Chokecherry*, *Native Plum* and *Woods Rose*. Large Tube Potted includes 8 different species consisting of; *Quaking Aspen*, *Narrowleaf Cottonwood*, *Red Osier Dogwood*, *Red Elderberry*, *Douglas Fir*, *Engelmann Spruce*, *Lodgepole Pine* and *Rocky Mountain Juniper*. One gallon pots are being offered again this year, we have 5 different species to choose from; *Sandcherry*, *Nanking Cherry*, *Russet Buffaloberry*, *Shrubby Cinquefoil* and *Wax Currant*. This year try ordering from our online store.

Watershed Inventory Wrap Up

Turning Data into Conservation

Jess Artz, Range Specialist



The Sublette County Conservation District has continued work this fall to finish up the data collection portion of the Big-Piney LaBarge watershed Restoration Project. This multi-watershed project in the southern portion of Sublette County has an overall goal to *“reestablish, maintain, or improve proper watershed, wetland, riparian, and stream channel*

functions in streams impacted by accelerated erosion to support natural or desired surface-water flow regimes and meet Wyoming water quality standards.”

The District's role in this BLM cooperative grant agreement is to complete an inventory of all of the culverts located within six sub watersheds. These six sub-watersheds encompass approximately 160,667 acres. Five of the six sub-watersheds have been completed to date and we plan to finish up with the field collection portion of the project this winter. Since data collection began in 2017 , there has been erosion data collected at approximately 2,037 culverts, 147 incisements and 86 headcuts across the landscape. This data has been used by engineers and BLM to create conceptual designs for on the ground watershed restoration projects.



Conservation Tree Spotlight

Russet Buffaloberry

Sno Ann Engler, Tree Program/Office Manager

Shepherdia canadensis (L.) Nutt.

Plant Symbol = SHCA



Photo provided by Wikipedia

Russet Buffaloberry also known as Soapberry is a native perennial woody shrub often found in Sublette County growing in aspen-conifer forests and higher elevations. Found in part shade, open woods, forest edges, river banks or dry rocky soil. Often mistaken for snowberry, but can be identified due to the rusty-brown scales on the

lower leaf surfaces. Bloom period occurs May-June. Fruit is fleshy, berry-like drupe, bright red with scattered brownish scales 1/4 to 1/3 inch diameter, with a single hard seed inside. While the fruit is edible and appealing, it is extremely bitter and “soapy” when crushed. The fruit was a favorite treat of the North American Indians, they would beat it in an equal quantity of water until a foam with the consistency of beaten eggs was formed. The foam would then be flavored with a sweet food such as cooked quamash bulbs or other fruits and then served as a special treat in feasts etc.

A recent study by Wyoming Game and Fish Department and University of Wyoming found russet buffaloberry to be the top shrub foraged by Mule Deer during summer months in the Wyoming Range. Buffaloberry is a good nitrogen fixing plant.



Photo provided by USDA Plants Database

NRCS Update



Grazing Management Issue:

Forage Production Records

Jennifer Hayward, District Conservationist

Time and seasons seem to run together. Time passes so fast and our memories are not as good as we would like. If you think back to a project you completed a few years back and put a “years ago” estimate on it, it might shock you to learn it was actually many years past that date. With so many things to manage and think about in a ranching operation, the last thing you may want to do is keep track of your grazing use. However, if your grass and forage is the most important component of your operation, then why aren’t you tracking and understanding it better? It’s because you may be on auto pilot. If this describes you, **STOP and REFLECT on this.**

An online newsletter, designed just for grazers, is available free and published every Tuesday. They highlight issues of importance to the livestock industry. In the March 4, 2019 edition, they discussed and provided tools for tracking your forage use and production. The article author quotes Jim Gerrish, author and grazing consultant:

“The reason for a grazing plan is because grass does not grow at the same rate every day of the year, nor does animal consumption rate stay the same. If you don’t have a plan for where you are going it is very hard to bring that supply and demand into balance. Imbalance leads to inefficiency building into the rest of the system and unnecessary economical and emotional stresses for producers. To balance supply and demand grazing managers must use a variable stocking rate throughout the year (i.e. don’t have the same number of animals on the place month after month). An increase in costs and decrease in income is very often the outcome of not having a grazing plan.”

Tracking your numbers by pasture and then recording a quick picture at each pasture will be key to helping you make decisions in the following years. BLM is now working on a pilot outcome based grazing program in Rawlins that is attempting to allow for more flexibility and response to grass production rather than traditional calendar dates.

NRCS continued.....

It's time to pay attention to your deposits (forage) rather than only focusing on your withdrawals (#s of beef) from the system. Grazing records are important to your operation and it's not just agency staff saying this, it's your peers!

Sign up for On Pasture newsletter <https://onpasture.com/>

The link for the grazing records article and free tools is located at:

<https://onpasture.com/2019/03/04/more-grazing-days-more-camping-days-plan-for-it-with-your-free-grazing-chart/>

Contact us if you would like to develop tools and a plan to monitor your grazing systems.

Jennifer Hayward, District Conservationist, Pinedale WY NRCS Field Office

Employee Spotlight



Arley Anderson

Team Lead-Ecological Site Inventory

Arley grew up on a family ranch in Wyoming and was involved in 4H and FFA. After high school he attended the University of Wyoming and obtained a Bachelor's of Science degree in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management, with a minor in Reclamation of Drastically Disturbed Lands in 2008. After collage Arley worked for the Laramie Rivers Conservation District, while continuing to help on the family ranch. In 2013 he moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico to start a family. Arley lived there for five years, working a maintenance position, before moving back to his hometown of Pinedale, Wyoming to further his career. Arley spent the summer as a Range Field Technician taking on various projects and proving himself to be worthy of any task put before him.

A view from above!

Red Desert to Hoback Migration Corridor

Melanie Purcell, Wildlife & Habitat Program Manager



In September, Melanie was invited on a flight tour of the northern portion of the Red Desert to Hoback mule deer migration corridor. The 150 mile one-way Red Desert to Hoback corridor is part of the larger Wyoming Game & Fish Department's designated Sublette Mule Deer Corridor.

Thank you to Joy Bannon of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation for the opportunity and thank you to EcoFlight and our pilot Bruce Gordon (and a little good weather) for a great flight!



Fremont Lake, Soda Lake & Little Soda Lake

EcoFlight has created a short video of the Red Desert to Hoback Mule Deer Migration Corridor—view it at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=my-ZTYky-el>

Photo courtesy EcoFlight

Healthy Rangelands

= Healthy Sublette County!!

Shari Meeks, Range Program Manager



Since its inception in 2008, the SCCD Range Program has had the opportunity to monitor, inventory, and study in various ways, the public lands of Sublette County. We currently have over 18 cooperative monitoring projects, particularly as partners with permittees operating on grazing allotments as well as the BLM or the USFS. SCCD has completed the NPL Ecological Site Inventory and will have completed the GNLBC ESI by the end of 2020. Not only that, we have helped the BLM improve their range improvement information on public lands and we have worked with wildlife habitat specialists to ensure that our Sublette County rangelands can sustain wildlife herds in their respective habitats.

One thing I have learned in these range adventures is that *range management is for everyone*. The Range program itself is young and always looking for ways we can provide services to all folks who utilize public and private rangelands in our county.

Continued on next page

Healthy Rangelands Continued.....

The benefits of our program stand to be enjoyed by all, including visitors and year-round residents *because* **healthy rangelands equates to:**

- healthy water resources for drinking and swimming
- sufficient habitat for fish populations to flourish
- upland habitat for a plethora of wildlife including sage-grouse and healthy winter ranges for large ungulates such as pronghorn, mule deer, elk, and moose
- a place to recreate and enjoy the beauty of Sublette County's landscapes
- abundant diversity of plants, insects, and soils for you to photograph
- resources abounding and available to be sustainably used by all

Rangelands are vital to Sublette County which is why the range program gets so excited to partner on projects where we get to understand the state of our rangelands, help provide prescriptions for sustainable uses, as well as help implement projects that are anticipated to help rehabilitate rangelands rather than debilitate them. We love our rangelands in Sublette County and invite you to contact our Range Program to learn more about what we do!

Gordon Issues Grouse Order

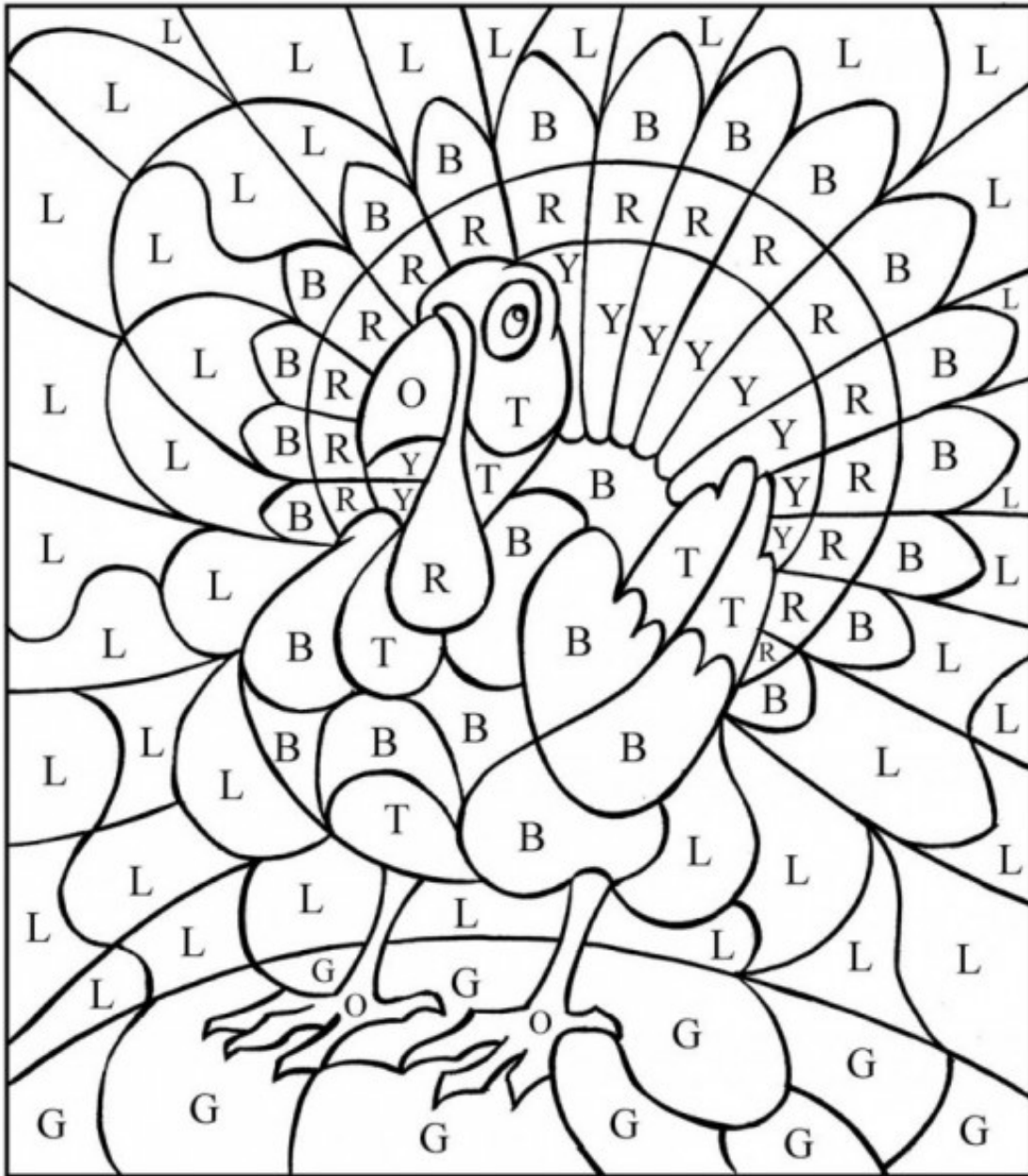


Governor Gordon issued Greater Sage-Grouse Executive Order 2019-3 on August 21, improving upon the State of Wyoming's Greater Sage-Grouse Core Area Protection Strategy. The new executive order (EO) streamlines concepts that are fundamental to Greater Sage Grouse conservation, improves its clarity, recognizes valid and exiting right and continues to provide regulatory certainty while allowing for adaption as new information emerges. The EO comes after public comment period earlier this year that resulted in the submission of numerous constructive ideas

aimed at improving Wyoming's approach. For more information visit: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/habitat/sage-grouse-management/Sage-Grouse-Executive-Order>

Kid's Corner

Color By Letter!



B = Brown T = Tan R = Red
G = Green Y = Yellow W = White
O = Orange L = Light Blue



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Who Are We?

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

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

Dan Perkins, Bryan Christensen, Dillon Gray, Taylor Kepley Soil Survey Team

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