

October, 2021



The Mountain Meadow

A quarterly publication from the
Sublette County Conservation District



Surface water quality monitoring and fall utilization are in full swing as cattle head home for winter.

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- Welcome Kristy Smith!
- 'Tis the Season to be Thinking Trees
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2022 tree sales open on November 1st. Check out the
article on page 11 for more information.

*"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

Michael Henn, District Manager



Fall is in the air and the aspen are changing colors, cattle are getting shipped and people are enjoying the last snow free days prior to Old Man Winter showing up. SCCD is no different we are finishing up our summer projects and prepping for those winter office days going through our data that was collected this summer.

Coke Landers our Board chairman, Shari Meeks, Jessica Artz, and I attended the National Association of Conservation District Southwest and Pacific Regional meeting that was hosted by Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) in Jackson the end of August. There conservation district leaders from around the west met to discuss conservation topics and ideas. Please see Jessica's article on page. 12 highlighting more from the meetings.

The first week of September Board and staff members went to the WACD Area V meeting that was hosted by the Star Valley Conservation District in Afton. We toured their Swift Creek restoration project that flows through the town of Afton where they are working on improving fish habitat and hydrologic function of that system. Then we met at the convention center to discuss topics specific to Wyoming and conservation districts. The group also reviewed and approved several resolutions to take forward to our state convention to hopefully become policy for WACD. In the business meeting chaired by our SCCD Board Chairman and WACD Area V Director Coke Landers, David Pape another SCCD Board member was re-elected to the WACD Area V Councilman.

One reminder is that our seedling tree sales start November 1st. Please get your orders in early as our suppliers have stated that they have limited stock on certain species this year. As fall in Sublette County hopefully continues a little longer so everyone can get caught up on their last-minute projects and get out and enjoy the last warm days of the year don't hesitate to reach out to SCCD for any questions regarding natural resources within our County.

How Does SCCD Monitor Water Quality in Sublette County?

Jess Artz, Range Specialist/Education & Outreach Coordinator

The Surface Water Quality Program was established in 2000 . Specific goals of the program include:

- Monitor water quality on public and private land in every major watershed within Sublette County
- Monitor water quality as streams move through the landscape
- Monitor water quality as streams exit Sublette County
- Use baseline data to examine trends and changes in water quality across Sublette County

Chemical & Physical water quality sampling has been taking place within 5 Sublette County watersheds. Check out the video below to see what a day of sampling looks like at the District!



[Click here to watch video](#)

Physical/Chemical
Water Quality Sampling



NRCS Update

Deterring Beavers

Jennifer Hayward, District Conservationist



Photo credit: MartinezBeavers.org

Beavers have their place in our watersheds. They prolong water impoundment and allow water flows to be in waterways longer. Beavers are actually considered a keystone species – a species which has a disproportionately large effect on its natural environment relative to its abundance. They are natural engineers and aid in keeping the water on the land for a longer period of time rather than it running off the landscape right after it touches down. In some places, we are building beaver dam analogs in small creeks to back up water temporarily and hoping beavers will move in and make a better dam.

However.... Beavers in irrigation systems and roadways are problematic for maintenance, water delivery and a host of other issues with which our irrigators are intimately familiar. On a few different occasions, a discussion regarding effective beaver deterrents has come up and I recently came across a USFS publication that has some good ideas regarding dissuading beavers from building at culverts. While not all designs may work in your specific situation, you may be able to modify these existing ideas to alleviate your beaver issues.

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NRCS Update Cont..

Some alternatives cited include:

- Culvert Grills (which do not prevent dam building but allow for easier removal)
- Culvert Fences (Beavers don't climb)
- Wire Mesh Culvert Extensions or Enlarged Cylinders (keep beavers as far away from the culvert)
- Perforated Tubing (control waterflow)
- Clemson Beaver Pond Leveler (alleviates the sound of rushing water)
- T- Culverts – (disperse the water)

Another consideration for you is to ask, do I need a culvert here? Can I get by with a hardened crossing or a rolling dip? Depending on your waterway, substrate or type of equipment that needs to cross, you may be able to consider something different than the traditional culvert. After you evaluate: the cost of culverts; that you need one likely larger than you think (think about a major rainstorm it has to pass, not just what is normal); maintenance that is difficult and the increasing erosion we see across the county - this may be the alternative we need to start considering more earnestly instead of installing another culvert. We learned a lot about the benefits of rolling dips when working with rehabilitation efforts from the Roosevelt Fire in 2018.

This USFS publication is a quick read, interesting and has many great pictures or drawings to envision the various methods.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/htmlpubs/htm05772830/index.htm>

Got the NEED to INTER-SEED?

Shari Meeks, Range Program Manager



Got a worn-out pasture? Need to invigorate your hay meadows? Want more diversity on your landscape? Fall is a great time to seed plants here in Sublette County. From hay meadows to sagebrush rangelands, inter-seeding is a popular option to enhance plant communities on your property. SCCD recently acquired a range drill which has three different seed box sizes to accommodate a wide variety of seed mixes to help you meet your property goals.

Drill Specifications

- 10' Planting Width
- 12" row spacings
- 10 planters (rows)
- 20" discs
- 3 seed boxes (grain/grass, fluffy, and legumes/small seeds)

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For a successful planting, consideration of your soil type, water availability, and climate are pertinent. Understanding these three things will help you determine the best seeds to sow to achieve your goal/s as a landowner. Web Soil Survey (<https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>) is a great tool you can use to obtain some of this information. If its too much to navigate, folks at SCCD can help guide you in the right direction.

When considering inter-seeding, it is important to keep in mind the potential for seeding undesirable plants, such as cheatgrass. There are several seed dealers that not only can help you determine the best seeds to plant but are also able to provide cheatgrass-free lots. We highly recommend you do your homework on the appropriate seeds to plant, seed dealers, and future surveillance of weeds.

The range drill is free to Sublette County landowners and is available on a first come-first serve basis. If you are interested in learning more or need help with your next seeding project, please give SCCD a call and we would be happy to help!

Inter-seeding Fact Sheet

"One Rock" Workshop Success

Melanie Purcell, Wildlife & Habitat Program Manager

The One Rock workshop in August was a success! Thank you to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation who provided the funding support to make this workshop a reality.

Over three days in the field, there were about 20 people who spent two days constructing Zeedyk (i.e., rock) structures and one day building Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA's) on the Bar Cross Ranch. We chose this location for the workshop because it offers a great demonstration location right off the county road allowing us to showcase these structures to other potential participants, as well as provide easy access for monitoring the effectiveness of these structures over time.



August 2021 Workshop— Completed Zuni Bowl

Why would we want to construct these low-tech structures in the first place? Gully erosion and channel incision reduce natural resiliency and water storage capacity, impacting working lands across the landscape. These tools help restore meadow systems, which are rare but critical to all life in Wyoming. Implementing these tools at a smaller scale allows more people to participate in restoration of these systems before they become a large dried-up gully too expensive to fix.

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As we walked the drainage with the instructor, we learned to read the landscape and talked about where and what type of low-tech structures might work at various locations. These structures slow erosion through grade control and headcut control on ephemeral drainages. For example, a One Rock Dam (ORD) is a low grade control structure that stabilizes the bed of the channel by slowing the flow of water, and a Rock Rundown controls low energy headcuts by providing a rock mulch that slows runoff and prevents the headcut from migrating further upslope. Both structures in turn increase soil moisture, infiltration, and plant growth.

If you missed this event and are interested in learning more, you can still watch the virtual webinar at <https://www.partnersinthesage.com/2021-zeedyk-wyoming-workshop>. Additionally, keep a look out for potential volunteer opportunities to give you hands on experience, and videos created from our very own local workshop. Together we can strengthen the resiliency of our wet meadow habitats!



August 2021 Workshop— Series of Rock rundowns and One Rock Dams along the drainage

Welcome to SCCD Kristy!



Hi there! My name is Kristy Smith, and I am the Conservation District's new Natural Resources Technician. I graduated in 2014 from Humboldt State University with my B.S. in Environmental Science with an emphasis in Ecological Restoration and spent the following year working with nonprofit agencies through AmeriCorps to monitor and improve habitat within the Mattole Watershed in Northern California. From there, I joined the Great Basin Institute in Reno, NV as a trail crew member and then as a Vegetation and Habitat Assessment technician working in remote regions throughout Nevada. I moved to Wyoming in the

summer of 2018 to continue habitat assessment and fell in love with the landscape and remoteness of western Wyoming. I'm very excited to join the SCCD team and play an active role in improving habitat and protecting natural resources in this county. This Fall, I began Utah State University's Master of Natural Resources Program. When I'm not in the office or collecting data in the field, you can find me out mountain biking, trail running, rock climbing, backpacking, skiing, or keying plant species.

Tis the Season.....

To be Thinking Trees!

Traci Berg, Administrative Coordinator

We are reminded of the transition from summer into fall by the mesmerizing colors of the foliage. This turning of the leaves triggers many changes in Sublette County. For some of us it means gathering of firewood, filling the freezer of fresh venison/elk, and gathering pairs from summer grazing allotments. It also means that it is time to think about next year's seedling planting.



The signal of fall's arrival also signals changes here at the District. While most programs are wrapping up with field season, the Seedling Tree Program is just starting up. This program is available to any landowner in Sublette County with at least 2 acres that will be planting for conservation. Conservation planting can look differently from landowner to landowner depending on the end goal. It can be anything from snow fence, wind breaks, visual screens, erosion control and even wildlife habitat.

Seedlings for our program are grown at a nursery in Colorado that also supplies many other conservation districts for neighboring states. This can make the supply of some species smaller than others, as a result it is recommended to put your seedling order in ASAP. Order forms along with a list of available trees/shrubs will be available November 1st on our website <https://www.sublettecd.com/tree-program>.



Please feel free to stop by or give us a call with any questions.

(307) 367-2364

217 Country Club Ln.

What We've Been up to

Joint Pacific/SW Regional NACD Meeting

Jess Artz, Range Specialist/ Education & Outreach Coordinator

The Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) hosted the joint Pacific/Southwest Regional National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Meeting in Jackson in August. This meeting was a great way to bring conservation district employees and supervisors together to discuss and learn about a variety of key topics of interest to people in Wyoming and across the region.



Governor Mark Gordon spoke in person at the event and emphasized the importance of locally led conservation efforts and the need for Conservation Districts to connect with their constituents and policy makers.

Several local policymakers called into the meeting, including Congresswoman Liz Cheney, and Senators John Barrasso and Cynthia Lummis, all of whom provided updates on key topics like the America the Beautiful Campaign (the 30x30 initiative).

On day two of the meeting, the Teton Conservation District (TCD) provided a field tour of conservation projects happening in and around the town of Jackson and Grand Teton National Park. Some of these included an artificial wetland that allowed for storm water storage and filtration prior to entering



cache creek and a native seeding within an old hay meadow plot within Grant Teton National Park. These tours were enjoyed by all participants and prompted a lot of questions. Tours like this are always beneficial for fueling ideas and projects that other districts can implement in their own communities. Thank you to WACD, NACD and TCD for a successful meeting!

Kids Corner

Bat Week is October 24-31st, 2021! Bat week is an annual, international celebration of the role of bats in nature. Head on over to <https://batweek.org/> to learn more about why bats matter.

Why Bats Matter!



78 bat species are
ENDANGERED
WORLDWIDE

FRAGILE

Most bats
only have
one pup
each year.



Twitter Facebook LinkedIn
batcon.org

Bat wingspans range
from 6 inches to 6 feet

6 inches



length of a dollar bill

6 feet



length of two guitars

Up to
95%

of "pioneer plants" grow
from seeds dispersed by
bats in cleared Latin
American rainforests.

▲ Bats play essential roles in keeping
populations of night-flying insects
in balance worldwide.

1,300+ different
bat
species

& 32% of U.S. bat species
call WY home!

Bats live
on all
continents
except
Antarctica.



Bats pollinate
more than

500

species of plants

Bats save

U.S. farmers

\$23 billion

annually in pesticides
& reduced crop
damage



> 20% of all
mammal species
are bats





Find us on Facebook!

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

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

Kristy Smith, Natural Resource Technician

Partners: USDA / NRCS Staff

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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