

December
2015

Partners in Resource Excellence

The Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) annual convention was held in Laramie November 2-5, 2015 in conjunction with Wyoming Weed and Pest Council and Society for Range Management Committee meetings, breakout sessions, and tours of the University of Wyoming Department of Ag Lab, Energy Innovation Center, Geological Museum, Rocky Mountain Herbarium, and the X Bar Ranch filled out a full agenda for the convention. The nearly 300 attendees were addressed by keynote speaker UW Professor Emeritus and author, Dennis Knight and were also provided an update on the Governor's Sage Grouse Executive Order by Bob Budd, Executive Director, Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust. Although the attendees had full agendas there was still time to participate in and enjoy a great live auction!!

MISSION STATEMENT

The Lake DeSmet Conservation District is dedicated to the development and implementation of programs to provide leadership and technical assistance for the conservation of Johnson County's natural resources, agricultural heritage and resource base, to promote the control of soil erosion, to promote and protect the quality and quantity of Wyoming's water and all other natural resources, to preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, to protect the tax base and to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of this County through responsible conservation planning.

John began working for the NRCS as a soil conservation technician in 1982. He has served under three district conservationists (Jerry Gladson, Phil Gonzales and Allison McKenzie). John was born and raised in Johnson County on the family ranch northeast of Buffalo, WY. He and his wife currently reside on the family operation that has thrived for over 90 years. John and Verna have four grown children and Verna recently retired from service with the Johnson County Sheriff's office.

John's commitment to local producers has been invaluable to the conservation efforts in Johnson County. Water development, irrigation management, grazing systems and stock water pipelines are just a few areas of expertise that John has applied his common sense approach to during his career. His vast knowledge of the local area, its historical timeline, and the affordable approach to conservation practices has earned him the respect of landowners, contractors, and fellow staff members. Training newly hired NRCS engineers and technicians across the entire state is yet another way John has proven to be an invaluable resource to our agency.

While John has many accolades in his career, his fellow employees will testify that his ability to bring levity to the office during stressful work environments is the true reason John will be missed. The office "prankster" has facilitated many laughs throughout the years all while maintaining a professional manner. John poses a working experience that can't be found in a book or ever replaced. The miles upon miles of stockwater pipeline that has been designed by John Lawrence and the conservation practices implemented within our county will serve as testament to a job well done for generations to come.

Please join the local NRCS staff in thanking John for 33 years of service as we bid him good luck in his retirement.

January 8, 2016 5-7 PM

Occidental Saloon

Drinks, Laughter, and Memories!!



Greater Sage-grouse found to be “Not Warranted” for listing.

On September 22, 2015, Secretary of the Interior Sally [Jewell announced](#) that the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) does not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Department of the Interior is calling the greater sage-grouse strategy “the largest land conservation effort in U.S. history” and “a 21st-century approach to conservation.” In reaching its “not warranted” finding, the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) relied upon the collective conservation efforts of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), State agencies, industry, and private landowners. The [final listing determination](#) follows the Service’s 2010 finding that listing of the greater sage-grouse was warranted but precluded by other ESA priorities, as well as the Service’s 2011 settlements with environmental groups in which the agency agreed to publish a final listing decision by September 30, 2015. This charismatic umbrella species has been a source of controversy throughout its 173 million acre range, which includes sagebrush habitat in 11 Western states where ranching and natural resource production are widespread. Following the Service’s 2010 “warranted but precluded” finding, Federal and State agencies, private landowners, industry, and environmental groups pursued a range-wide conservation strategy to benefit the species and to diminish the need for ESA listing. The Service’s ultimate decision that listing is no longer warranted was largely based upon these conservation efforts, which include BLM and USFS land management plans, Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs) voluntarily entered into by private landowners, and State plans to conserve the species. Concurrent with the listing decision, BLM and USFS announced their finalization of 98 land-use plans intended to conserve greater sage-grouse habitat, avoid disturbance of habitat areas considered essential to the species, and support sustainable economic development on various public lands across 10 states. Ultimately, the Service determined that the primary threats to greater sage-grouse—which were identified in 2010 as habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms—have been “ameliorated” by conservation efforts implemented by Federal, State, and private landowners.

Upcoming Events

Small Acreage Workshop

What: Small Acreage Workshop:

This workshop will be an opportunity for landowners to get together and talk about problems they have encountered and to attend expert-led sessions to learn about different topics regarding land management and will strive to help landowners maintain or improve the quality of life in Wyoming by raising healthier crops, lawns, and animals, while protecting and utilizing their natural resources such as water, soil, plants, and renewable energy.

When: Thursday, February 25th 9 am – Noon

Where: Johnson County Fire Hall
790 Volunteer Lane

****Date and Time may change, please keep an eye on our website and the Buffalo Bulletin****



Lake DeSmet Conservation District is once again offering conservation quality trees, shrubs, seedlings, and perennial flowers. These reduced price products are offered through LDCD to be used for and included in windbreaks, shelterbelts, wildlife habitat enhancement projects, noise barrier plantings, and yard plantings. These products are intended for use by all Johnson County residents including large acreage owners, small acreage owners, and in-town residents as a way to incorporate conservation into your landscape whether it's large or small. The wide variety of trees and shrubs offered are known to perform well in Northeast Wyoming's varied climate and soil types. Additionally, for the second year, LDCD is offering a variety water-wise perennial flowers that are not only beautiful in your landscaping but also contribute to water conservation due to their drought tolerance and ability to grow with little watering from the landowner. Please stop by the District office at 621 West Fetterman to pick up your order form or print one from our website at www.ldcd.org. While deciding what to purchase and plant please take advantage of the resources listed below to help you out:

A Guide to the Trees in Buffalo:

Produced by LDCD this booklet showcases trees that are thriving in Buffalo. Available free of charge at the District office.

Tree Owner's Manual:

Produced by Wyoming State Forestry this booklet provides extensive information regarding all aspects of trees and tree planting.

<http://slf-web.state.wy.us/forestrydivision/forestryprograms/wytree-owners-manual-toc.pdf>

Plants with Altitude:

From Barnyards and Backyards this booklet discusses regionally native plants for Wyoming Gardens. Available free of charge at the District office.

City of Buffalo 2015 Community Forest Tree Assessment Report

In July 2015 Mike Garvey, a registered consulting arborist, conducted a community tree assessment for the City of Buffalo with funding by the Wyoming State Forestry Division, through a grant from the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry Program.

The purpose of this project was to fill a recommendation given to the City of Buffalo to inventory its community forest trees. This inventory serves as a useful tool to calculate actual tree benefits, record tree condition and health, schedule and prioritize tree maintenance, and locate optimum planting spaces for a new generation of trees to carry on Buffalo's legacy of sustaining its natural resources and urban forest canopy.

The report was composed from visual assessment data of the current conditions of public trees and gathered information from various local and state public agencies relative to past and present tree management policies, operations, concerns, and needs, for the City of Buffalo, Wyoming. Based upon the findings from field observations and public agency input, the assessment includes proposed non-binding recommendations to assist the community of Buffalo for future planning and management of its public tree resources. The report is viewed as an evaluation or review of Buffalo's public trees in terms of their condition and management. It was not composed as a formal management plan; it only offers various recommendations that the City may consider as a "road map" that leads to a comprehensive plan adopted by the City Council.

The historical and recently planted trees located along residential streets, developed parks, and the business district - as well as the trees growing in the natural parklands - both contribute ecological, environmental, economic, and amenity value; yet they require maintenance and management options to maintain public safety and keep tree resource benefits viable. With the pursuit of such an inventory, the City of Buffalo has taken a progressive step forward in terms of the health and maintenance of its urban forest system for its present and future populace.

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Meet the Board and Staff

Lake DeSmet Conservation District

Board of Supervisors

Ryan Fieldgrove: Chair

Luke Todd: Vice Chair

Travis Rule: Secretary/Treasurer

Virgie Watt: Member

Priscilla Welles: Member

District Staff

Zach Byram: District Manager

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff

Allison McKenzie: District Conservationist

**John Lawrence: Soil Conservation
Technician**

Kassie Bales: Range Conservationist

NRCS Phone: 684-2526 ext. 3