

# Weston County Natural Resource District Newsletter

OCTOBER 2019

## WCNRD ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY 2018-2019

### District Supervisors

Alicia Redding-  
Chairman

David Tydsal  
Vice-Chairman

Emily Hartinger-  
Treasurer

Gene Norman-  
Supervisor

Tucker Hamilton  
Supervisor

### District Staff

Lacey Sloan, Coor-  
dinator

Austin Sommerville  
NWTF Forester

### District Hours

Monday-Friday  
7 a.m. – 3:30p.m.

### USDA-NRCS Staff

Paul Eitel  
NRCS– District  
Conservationist

Joey Rhoades  
NRCS Range Con-  
servationist

- 19 Forestry Projects that helped landowners manage 539 acres
  - 94 participants in Hazardous Waste Day and donated canned goods to Bread Office. Event cost roughly \$14,000.
  - 9 Rural Cost Share applications awarded to improve rangeland health and water distribution.
  - 1 Beef Symposium was held free of charge where 4 presenters provided information to 29 landowners.
  - Organized 4 city clean up days in Newcastle WY.
  - Donated books for youth and adults regarding Natural Resource topics to the Weston County Library.
  - Participated in the Weston County Fair fun night and taught kids and adults about aging trees and forest health
  - 4th Annual National Trails Day Hike 8 Hikers and 3 dogs!
  - Graduated from the WY L.E.A.D program Nov 2018.
  - Continued to provide Conservation Tree Sales.
  - Held Annual Rural Well Water Testing in Spring 2019.
  - 13 landowners participated in the new cost share opportunity for Septic Pumping to deter water pollutants from the watershed.
- \* If you have any programs or ideas feel free to share them with us! Send to :  
lacey.sloan@usda.gov



## Hazardous Waste Day RECAP



### TOTAL COLLECTION OF MATERIALS AT HHW DAY:

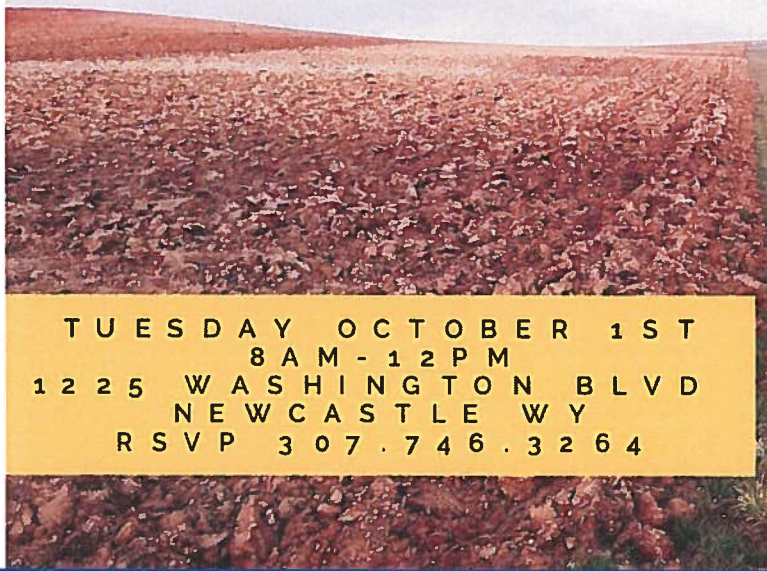
202lb Aerosol Flammable  
3048lb of paint remover/thinner  
333lb Flammable liquids  
125gallons of acetone/toluene  
4lb sodium cyanide  
212lbs of Toxic Solids  
26lb of Corrosive liquid acids  
192lb of corrosive liquid bases  
117lb of batteries  
4lb of lithium batteries  
11lb of cadmium batteries  
2821lb latex paint  
6lb mercury containing bulbs  
4,415lbs of electronics  
116lbs of fluorescent light bulbs



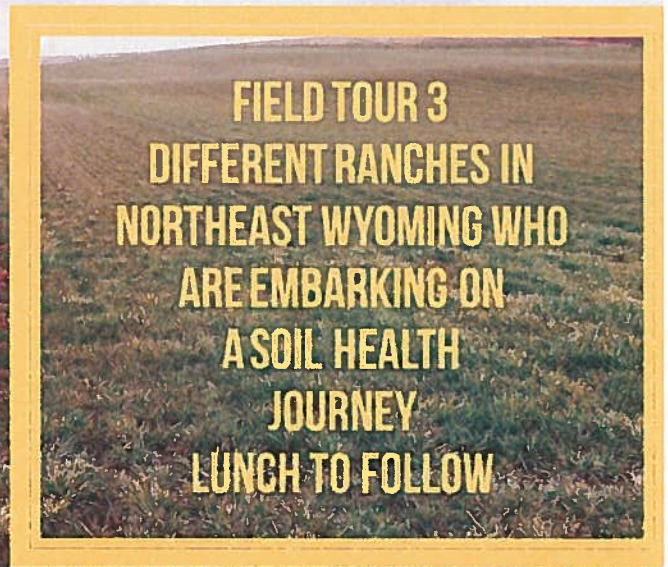
We had a total of 117 vehicles participate. We received 228lbs in food donations that were taken to the local BREAD office in Newcastle, and \$672.00 in cash donations that went towards payment for the event. For reference, one box of electrical waste is a 4x4x4 pallet and can be seen in the left photo and costs us roughly \$500 to properly dispose of.



# Soil Health and Cover Crop Field Day



T U E S D A Y   O C T O B E R   1 S T  
8 A M - 1 2 P M  
1 2 2 5   W A S H I N G T O N   B L V D  
N E W C A S T L E   W Y  
R S V P   3 0 7 . 7 4 6 . 3 2 6 4



**FIELD TOUR 3  
DIFFERENT RANCHES IN  
NORTHEAST WYOMING WHO  
ARE EMBARKING ON  
A SOIL HEALTH  
JOURNEY  
LUNCH TO FOLLOW**



## **THE BULL BEHIND THE MOVEMENT AGAINST BEEF Dusty Downey: Conservation Ranching Lead Audubon Rockies**

With the Amazon rainforest on fire and Burger King selling Impossible Burgers, there's a lot of concern about beef and ranching right now. But mass media hasn't told both sides of the story.

As a rancher in northeast Wyoming and a lifelong conservationist (yes, those two things can go together), I rarely care what people outside of my family and my circle of neighbors say about my business or my environmental practices. But recent publicity has made cattle ranching seem antithetical to conservation. It's not.

Much like how not all cars and coffee are the same, not all beef is created equal.

I can understand people's misgivings toward beef that is raised in a feedlot with huge doses of antibiotics, or raised on land that was previously rainforest, but then deforested to create pasture. These practices are not the industry I know and love. There's a better way, and believe it or not, it happens when ranchers and conservationists work together.

I'm part of a movement to provide people with healthy beef that doesn't require burning down the rainforest to produce it. My movement humanely raises animals on open pastures that provide quality habitat for wildlife. It uses good grazing management to sequester carbon and continually monitors the soil, vegetation and wildlife.

My movement promotes beef raised right here in the U.S., which provides jobs, boosts local Wyoming economies and maintains open range lands for the benefit of wildlife. As someone who loves ranching and wildlife, I want people to know what good beef really is.

I don't deny that cattle emit greenhouse gasses, but I will counter that animals raised on open pastures organically fertilize the soil and help those pastures trap carbon, as well. Research is even starting to show that carbon sequestration due to good grazing may, in fact, help to offset climate change.

Another reason that cattle are blamed for greenhouse emissions is the conversion of carbon-rich rainforests into pasture and cropland for animal feed.

The solution to this is simple: quit eating foreign beef that contributes to the problem! Instead, go to your local grocer and buy grass-fed local beef.

Unfortunately, even this has become challenging. Much of the beef in American grocery stores labelled "grass-fed" and "Product of USA" is coming from South America, Australia and New Zealand, according to a report from the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture.

One way to ensure that you can be proud of the beef you buy is to make sure it has a green Audubon seal.

Yes, you heard that right. The National Audubon Society, one of the major conservation nonprofits, is teaming up with ranchers to produce products that are local and conserve wildlife habitat.

Why would Audubon take an interest in ranching? Because more than half of America's grasslands have disappeared, and grassland birds have declined by 40% since 1966, according to Audubon's 2019 North American Grasslands and Birds Report.

What not enough people realize is that working ranches are the best remaining strongholds of wildlife habitat in America's Great Plains.

Not only does ranching keep grasslands from being plowed and paved, it can also improve the quality and diversity of wildlife habitat on them when managed properly. At the same time, ranching is critical for local Wyoming economies. But economic success doesn't have to come at the expense of nature.

Audubon's Conservation Ranching Initiative is connecting eco-conscious consumers with bird-friendly ranches. By certifying ranches that are protecting and restoring habitat for birds and other wildlife, we're adding value to their products and helping them stay competitive in the market.

At the same time, the initiative's science-based ranch management methods restore habitat for birds, improve soil health and water quality, reduce flooding and erosion, and capture the atmospheric carbon that's driving climate change.

We don't need to stop eating or buying beef; we just need to get it from the right places. Done right, cattle ranching can preserve our open spaces, restore our grasslands, protect wildlife habitat and support our local economies.

Learn where you can support Wyoming ranches that are doing just this at [rockies.audubon.org/ranching](https://rockies.audubon.org/ranching). And if anybody asks, tell them you are combating climate change. That should get their attention.



# “THE SWEET AND SOUR OF SWEETCLOVER”

BY JOEY RHOADES  
NRCS RANGE MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

Precipitation, both amount and timing, are important for many different aspects of an ecosystem. Spring rains, and rain that has extended throughout the summer have provided adequate timing and amounts that have favored the growth of yellow sweetclover in Weston County. While the name is sweetclover, this plant is not a true clover, and is related more to alfalfa than clover. Yellow sweetclover is a member of the legume family, it is considered a biennial plant, which means it takes two growing seasons to complete its growing cycle. This species is not native to North America and was introduced in the 1700's from Europe. Production can be very high with this plant and is able to reach heights of up to eight feet in favorable conditions. In low precipitation or drought years, the plant may be lacking from the landscape until another large precipitation spring occurs. Sweetclover seeds are viable for over 40 years in a soil bed, which allows for massive blooms during favorable precipitation years.



It is a very drought tolerant plant and does provide some benefits to the rangelands with its large root system, it opens up the soil to allow for greater water and air absorption, it also combats compaction of the soil. The large taproot system is able to reach greater than five feet into the soil and access nutrients other plants are not able to reach. By doing this it helps increase the nutrients within the soil by fixing nitrogen when the correct bacteria have met the root system. Yellow sweetclover is used by livestock, elk, deer, antelope, and many other small animals for forage and cover. Another large benefit is that honeybees as well as other beneficial insect species are attracted to the plant.

While it is a palatable plant, high in protein, and digestible, it comes with some properties individuals need to be aware of. Sweetclover contains a substance known as coumarin. When in the plant there is no issue

with the substance, however if it is cut and baled improperly to be used for forage it may become problematic. If it is wet when it is baled and becomes moldy, the mold reacts with the coumarin to create dicoumarol which is an anti-clotting agent. Any presence of mold will cause the reaction to occur. If it is consumed by animals, they may begin to bleed internally, pregnant livestock may experience abortions, and death may follow. One sign of this poisoning is dark tarry manure.

Some ways to combat this are to allow a large amount of time from clipping to baling, decreasing the water component within the plant material. The problem is worse with large round bales, so if possible bale into smaller rounds, or square bales. Cutting of the clover before it has large stalks will also help

decrease drying time and limit mold growth. Another option if sweetclover is to be used as a winter forage is to make bale silage (baleage). This is a very good option in wet years, such as this current year. With this method the clover is cut, baled when the moisture is around 55%, and then immediately wrapped in airtight plastic. The lack of oxygen places the bale into an aerobic environment which will prevent mold growth and preserve the quality of the bale.



## KEEP UP WITH US AND DON'T MISS OUT!!!!

WCNRD Publishes newsletters 4 times a year and there are often times information or events come up that don't make it into our newsletter! Please LIKE and FOLLOW our Facebook page or visit our website at [www.westoncountynrd.org](http://www.westoncountynrd.org) frequently to keep up with all our activities!



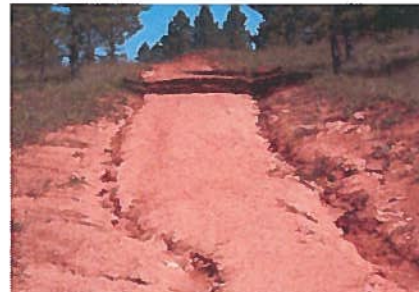


# On The Road Again

By: Austin Sommerville, NWTF Forester

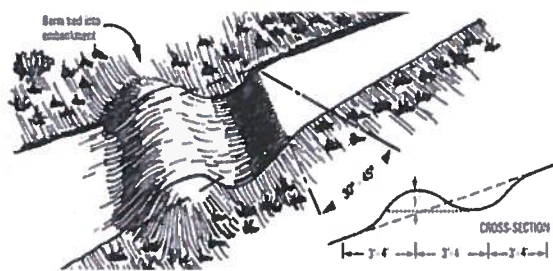
## “Tips and Tricks on Fixing the Ruts!”

It has been a wet year. Though the summer rain has been welcome to our pastures, lawns and ponds, flooding has damaged or destroyed many of our roads. Forest roads are essential access points for forest management, utility maintenance, livestock operations, and fire suppression. Due to their propensity for erosion, forest roads are a major source of sediment deposits into streams. Not only does that sediment deposit have adverse effects on stream health and aquatic wildlife, the roads are left with deep rills and gulleys that eventually leaves them undrivable.



Washed out roads not only hinder your ability to do routine forest management and ranching, it hinders response to emergencies such as wildfires. The 2019 fire season has been slow in the Black Hills. That will not last. The excess herbaceous vegetation brought by summer rain this year, will be flash fuel for next year’s fire season. If left unrepaired, these damaged roads will slow response time.

Road design can mitigate this, though under heavy rains, even the most well designed roads will require some maintenance. Here are some erosion control tips to consider while repairing your roads.

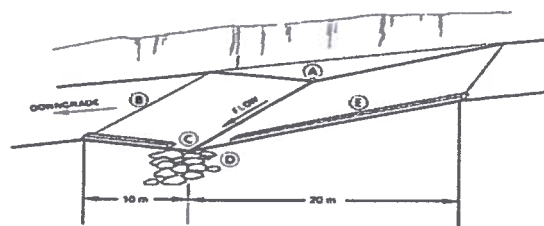


### Water Bars

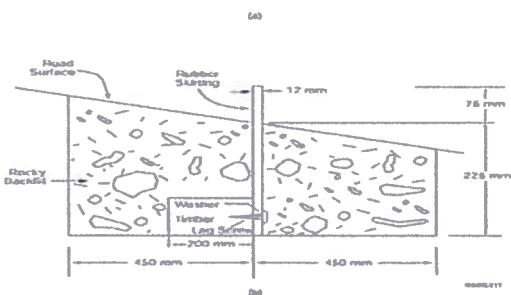
A water bar is a small berm crossing the road at an angle to direct surface water off the road into an area less prone to erosion. The height and spacing between these features should be determined by the grade of the road. Steeper roads require shorter spacing and taller height. When installing water bars, you should consider rock armoring the drainage outlet to prevent erosion cutting into the road.

### Rolling Dips

Rolling dips are an effective drainage option for low to medium use roads. They can be used on roads with or without ditches and do not obstruct traffic as much as water bars. Rolling dips run perpendicular to the direction to the road and drain water off the road surface on the low side. Rolling dips also benefit from rock armoring at the outlet.



### Rubber Water Diverter



A rubber water diverter is usually made of an old snowmobile track or conveyor belt. A small trench is dug into the road surface at the same angle as a water bar. The rubber is partially buried leaving a portion above the road to divert water. This drainage feature is best used as a last minute improvement on temporary roads. It can quickly be installed with hand tools, but is easily damaged by traffic. Plan on frequent replacement on permanent roads.



### Harmful Cyanobacteria Blooms

Cyanobacteria, commonly known as Blue Green Algae, can pose health threats to people, pets and livestock. Currently DEQ is working with The WY Dept. of Health and the WY Livestock board, and other stakeholders to address these harmful blooms that occur in surface waters. Visit: <https://www.wyohcbs.org/> for more news and advisories, FAQs and resources to report a Cyanobacteria bloom in your area.





## Contact us...

Weston County Natural Resource District  
1225 Washington Blvd. Suite 3  
Newcastle, WY 82701  
Phone: 307-746-3264  
E-mail: [Lacey.sloan@usda.gov](mailto:Lacey.sloan@usda.gov)

**Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
Rate  
Newcastle, WY  
Permit No. 52**

The mission of the Weston County Natural Resource District is to provide leadership in conserving the natural resources in Weston County by providing information, education and technical assistance to meet the needs of our users.

**Meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month at 3:00 p.m. at the USDA Service Center. Members of the public are welcome to attend.**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800)795-3272 (voice) or (202)720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### October

- 1– Soil Health and Cover Crop Field Day (9-12pm USDA Conference Room/Field Tour)  
RSVP by calling 307-746-3264 ext 111
- 8-WCNRD Board Meeting (3pm to the cows come home)
- 14– OFFICE CLOSED (COLUMBUS DAY)

### November

**FYI: Office house will vary after November for the WCNRD as our Manager will be out on Maternity Leave. If you need immediate assistance call Paul Eitel with NRCS 307-746-3264.**

**Emails will be answered at [lacey.sloan@usda.gov](mailto:lacey.sloan@usda.gov)**

- 11– OFFICE CLOSED (Observance of Veterans Day)
- 12– WCNRD Board Meeting (3pm– the cows come home)
- 28– OFFICE CLOSED ( Observance of Thanksgiving)

### December

**\*\* Be looking in the newspaper, online, and in your email for upcoming tree order forms\*\***

- 24-25– OFFICE CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS EVE/DAY

### January

- 1-OFFICE CLOSED (New Years Day)