



# Conservation Clamor

WESTON COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICT

March 2024

## What's Happening?

There's a lot going on at WCNRD! Here's a look at some of the district's current programs and opportunities:

### Classes

**Newcastle** @ district office  
Weeds in the Garden - 3/14 @ 6 p.m.  
Drip Irrigation - 4/11 @ 6 p.m.  
Register online or call the EWC office  
307-746-3603

**Upton** @ high school  
Trees for Weston County - 4/4 @ 7 p.m.  
Call 307-468-2495 to sign up

### Meetings

**Local Working Group Meeting** - 5/8 @ 4 p.m.  
USDA Conference Room

### Cost-Share Programs

**Well Water Testing** - call to reserve kits by April 10th  
**Septic Maintenance Cost-Share** - \$100 cost share on septic maintenance

### Sales

**Seedling Trees** - Orders due 4/3.  
**Bat Boxes and Bird Houses** - On hand and available for purchase  
**Landscape Fabric**- On hand and available for purchase  
**Compost Bins** - Scheduled for delivery mid-April

### Grants

**Wildfire Mitigation Grant** - in partnership with the Fire Protection District, funds fire mitigation through fuel load reduction on private property  
**Outdoor Education Assistance Grant** - provides funding for schools and youth organizations to provide hands-on outdoor learning experiences that focus on natural resources and/or agricultural activities

Share your thoughts on local conservation priorities

## Local Working Group Meeting

Bring your insights and opinions regarding natural resource concerns to the attention of natural resource agency personnel. Your voice can initiate program revisions or creation to improve future sustainability of our natural resource base and help us better serve our local area.

All residents of  
Weston County  
are invited!

**Wednesday**  
**May 8th, 2024**  
**4:00 p.m.**



**Invited Agencies:** Weston County Natural Resource District, USDA NRCS, FSA, US Forest Service, Wyoming State Forestry, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, BLM, Weed and Pest

USDA Service Center  
Conference Room  
1225 Washington Blvd  
Newcastle, WY



## Board of Supervisors

David Tysdal dtysdal.wcnrd@gmail.com  
Chairman, Rural

Tucker Hamilton thamilton.wcnrd@gmail.com  
Vice Chairman, Rural

Emily Hartinger ehartinger.wcnrd@gmail.com  
Secretary/Treasurer, Rural

Gene Norman gnorman.wcnrd@gmail.com  
Supervisor, Urban

Tom Streeter tstreeter.wcnrd@gmail.com  
Supervisor, At-Large

### District Staff

Caleb Carter ccarter.wcnrd@gmail.com  
District Manager (307) 746-3264 ext. 4

Erin Whitcher westoncountynrd@gmail.com  
Administrative Assistant

District Hours  
7:30 am to 4 pm—Monday-Friday

The USDA is an equal opportunity  
provider and employer

### NRCS Field Office

Hours: 7 am to 3:30 pm (307) 746-3264 ext. 3

Paul Eitel paul.eitel@usda.gov  
District Conservationist

Austin Sommerville asommerville@nwtf.net  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
Cooperative Forester



### *Find us online!*

Be sure to check out our new website for all your updates and WCNRD news. You can find forms to sign up for programs, event details, and much more!

[westoncountynrd.org](http://westoncountynrd.org)

### You can also connect with us on social media:

 [facebook.com/westoncountynrd](https://facebook.com/westoncountynrd)

 [instagram.com/westoncountynrd](https://instagram.com/westoncountynrd)

## Mission Statement

*“Providing leadership in conserving the natural resources in Weston County by providing information, education and technical assistance to meet the needs of our users.”*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Board Meeting	April 9th, 3 @ District Office
Tree Sale	Ends April 3rd
Well Water Testing	Reserve kits by April 10 <sup>th</sup> , Testing day April 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Local Working Group Meeting	May 8 <sup>th</sup> @ USDA Service Center Conference Room

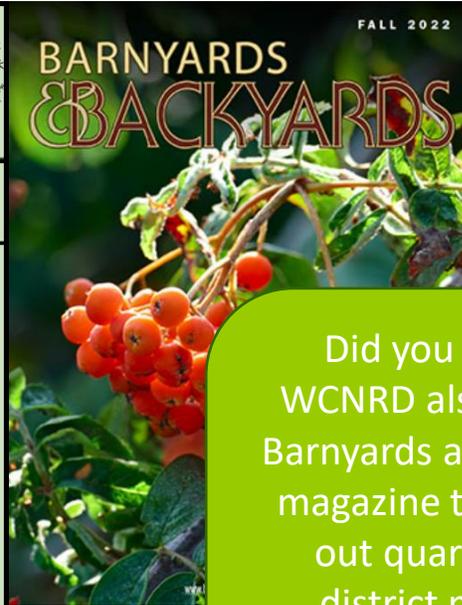


# 2024 Community Tree Grant

Do you know a public area in Weston County that would be better with trees? WCNRD is now taking applications for the 2024 Community Tree Grant.

The grant is a 60/40 cost share. Seven grants up to \$500 each are funded annually. Visit our website for more details or to download an application.

**Projects must be completed and applications submitted by June 1, 2024**  
[westoncountynrd.org/community-tree-grant/](http://westoncountynrd.org/community-tree-grant/)



Did you know the WCNRD also offers the Barnyards and Backyards magazine that we send out quarterly? Any district member is welcome to sign up to get one mailed to you!

If you're interested in getting the magazine call: 307-746-3264

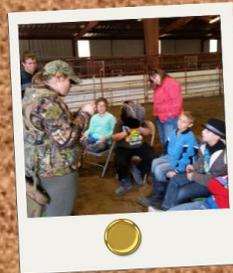
## Did you know that the Conservation Clamor is also available in your email? **E-Newsletter**

In an efforts to save money and reduce our paper usage, we email the same newsletter to over 200 district members, saving over \$500 per year! That allows us to put more money into our conservation efforts.

If you would rather receive your newsletter via email, please contact us at [westoncountynrd@gmail.com](mailto:westoncountynrd@gmail.com) or call the District Office at (307) 746-3264, ext. 4

## We're accepting community photo submissions!

Contribute to conservation by sharing your photos of Weston County, so that we show the beauty of our county in our educational materials, publications, website, and social media.



Scan to learn more





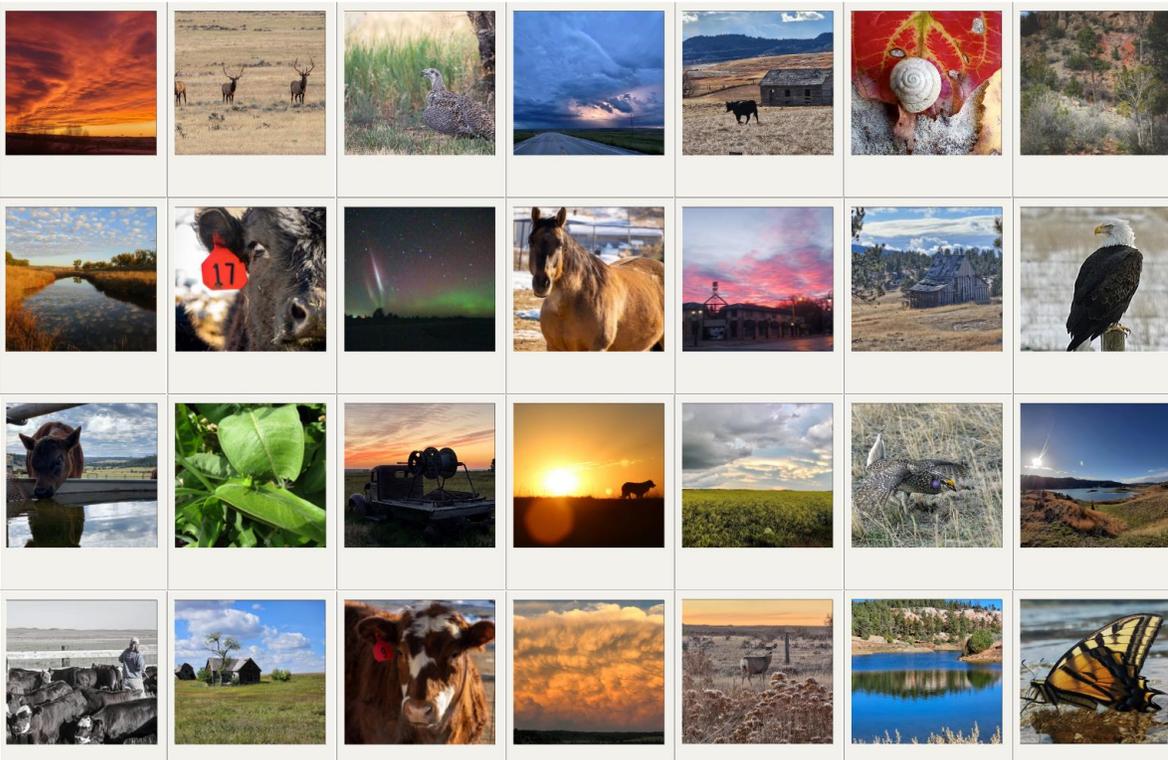
**The first quarter of the year is flying by and WCNRD has been busy! Here's what we've accomplished this quarter:**

In **January**, WCNRD organized and hosted a House Bill 60 training day that was available to all public officers. 19 people representing 10 boards attended. Caleb, Austin, and Paul judged at the Northeast Regional Science Fair. WCNRD submitted letters commenting on the BLM Rock Springs Resource Management Plan and the Security Exchange Commission's plan to list Natural Asset Companies on the New York Stock Exchange.

In **February**, Caleb, Paul, and Erin attended the Career and Trade Fair that was hosted by Newcastle High School. They provided information about WCNRD and NRCS, as well as natural resource careers and degree programs offered by colleges in Wyoming and nearby states. WCNRD submitted a letter commenting on the Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System and drafted a letter of support for the Bent Sprockets club to help them pursue grant funding. Caleb testified to the Wyoming Senate Ag Committee in support of House Bill 43. Caleb taught a community education class about raised garden beds, which 8 people attended.

**March** looks like it will be just as busy. Seedling tree orders are trickling in, and we are gearing up for Well Water Testing Day in April. Caleb has several more community education classes lined up in March and April, and we are starting to prepare for Natural Resource Camp! Applications have been submitted for our Conservation Cost Share program and will be reviewed at our March board meeting. WCNRD is acting as a cooperating agency with BLM and Black Hills National Forest for upcoming projects, including treating cheatgrass in the Elk Mountain area.

Finally, we have been holding a photo contest on Facebook. We had ten participants and 28 entries. Facebook voting ends on March 15<sup>th</sup> and the winner will be announced March 20<sup>th</sup>. The winning entry will be featured on the gallery page of our website, and all entries will be included in a gallery along with the photographer's name and information about the photo.



**The winner will be announced on March 20th! Check out the Photo Contest Gallery on Facebook or our website.**



<https://westoncountynrd.org/about-wcnrd/gallery/>

## Store, Charge, and Dispose of Your Batteries Safely!

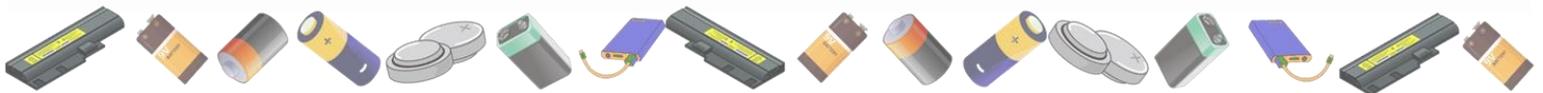
Fire Departments worldwide have seen an increase in fires from lithium batteries in the last few years, mainly from the larger lithium-ion batteries like those used in e-bikes and e-scooters. However, smaller batteries in electronic devices also contributed to the increase. These fires are particularly dangerous because they can get incredibly hot (over 700°F) in a matter of seconds and can reach temperatures in the thousands, making them almost impossible to extinguish. Lithium-ion batteries can also leak flammable gas or liquids, and the burning fumes are very toxic. These fires are frequently caused by thermal runaway, where a lithium-ion cell enters an uncontrollable self-heating state. Thermal runaway can also result in the battery or device melting or exploding.

Lithium-ion batteries are generally safe when they are of good quality and are charged and used under normal conditions. Many fires result from people using knockoff batteries; these batteries are cheap because they're low quality and do not meet safety standards, meaning they are more prone to faults, cell failure, and thermal runaway. It's important to store batteries at appropriate temperatures, as conditions that are too hot can lead to thermal runaway, and charging a cold battery can permanently damage the battery, shortening its lifespan and making it more prone to fail. If a battery has been stored in cold temperatures, let it warm up to room temperature before charging or using it. Finally, when charging a battery, make sure you're using the right equipment and doing it in a safe location. Use a charger designed for your device, never leave a charging battery unsupervised, charge away from combustible materials, and ensure the battery or device is well-ventilated so that it can disperse any heat that builds up.

When a battery is going bad, there are usually some warning signs. If you notice a change in the color or shape of the battery, if it becomes extremely hot to the touch, if it is making an odd noise (hissing, crackling, popping), or is emitting smoke or strange odors, immediately unplug the device from the power source and carefully move it to an isolated location away from anything flammable. Place the battery in or on inert material such as sand or clay cat litter.

It's important to dispose of all batteries properly, but especially lithium-ion batteries due to the fire hazard and level of toxicity they present. Batteries that end up in garbage trucks, landfills, or recycling facilities can ignite or explode, causing fires, releasing toxic and flammable fumes, and injuring workers. Batteries and electronics that contain batteries need to be disposed of at specific locations. Fortunately, many stores allow people to drop off batteries for disposal. To find a drop-off location near you, visit [call2recycle.org/locator](https://call2recycle.org/locator). Of course, we accept batteries at our Hazardous Waste Day.

WCNRD is now accepting batteries for disposal at the office year-round, though for safety reasons we have a few limitations.



### Will We Accept Your Battery?

Yes

No

- All single-use batteries of any type
  - A-sizes, C, D, 9v, CR123A, 23A, CR2032, "button" batteries
- **Undamaged** rechargeable batteries
  - Any type
  - Discharged below 50%
  - Under 20lbs

- Rechargeables that are fully charged
  - Please discharge below 50%
- Automotive batteries
- Damaged batteries
- Single battery 20lbs or more
- Unable to fit inside 5-gallon bucket

- If you have a rechargeable battery that is experiencing thermal runaway, unplug it and carefully move it to an isolated area away from anything combustible, then call emergency services (911). If possible, place in sand or clay cat litter.
- If you have a damaged rechargeable battery, contact the manufacturer or Call2Recycle at 1.888.224.9764 for instructions on safe disposal.
- If we don't accept a battery at the office for one of the above reasons, keep in mind that most battery types are accepted at various locations in Rapid City Casper, and at our annual Hazardous Waste Day. **Don't put batteries in the trash!**



Scan for a list of locations in Rapid City that accept batteries for recycling/disposal

<https://www.rapidcityrecycles.org/batteries--lithium-batteries.html>

## March 13<sup>th</sup> is Know Your Well Day

But any day is a good day to learn more about your water well and drinking water supply.

It is your responsibility to maintain your private well to prevent groundwater contamination. Regularly inspect and address any issues promptly to protect your water supply.

The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) recommends testing your well yearly.

Visit [knowyourwell.org](http://knowyourwell.org) for more information about common contaminants, well protection, test results, water treatment, and much more!



# Spring Well Water Testing

**Call to reserve kits by 3PM on April 10th**

**Pick up your kits and pay April 15th-19th**

**Collect samples and return to us by 10AM April 23nd.**

- \$30• Annual Maintenance: Bacteria/E.Coli Coliform presence, anions, conductivity, pH, Total Dissolved Solids
- \$50• Domestic+Bacteria: Bacteria/E.Coli Coliform, anions, anion-cation balance, pH, conductivity, Langelier index, Livestock suitability/irrigation classification, Total Dissolved Solids, Hardness, metals, sodium absorption ration, Nitrogen/Nitrate + Nitrite
- \$40• Livestock and Irrigation Suitability: Anions, conductivity, Livestock suitability/irrigation classification, Total Dissolved Solids, Metals, Metal digestion, sodium absorption ratio, Nitrogen/Nitrate + Nitrite



**Weston County Natural Resource District**

1225 Washington Blvd. Suite 3

Newcastle, WY 82701

(307) 746-3264, ext. 4

[westoncountynrd@gmail.com](mailto:westoncountynrd@gmail.com)

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

**March 2024 Conservation Clamor**

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

The Weston County Natural Resource District is an equal opportunity employer

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