



Conservation Clamor

WESTON COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICT

January 2025

Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration Practices

Beaver Dam Analogs and Zeedyk Structures are among the growing number of low-tech, process-based restoration (LTPBR) practices used to restore and improve streams, riparian areas, and meadows.

What do those terms mean?

- **Low-tech** – most of the work is done by hand using materials found in nature, such as rocks and logs.
- **Process-based** – the goal is to create structures that let naturally occurring processes do the work.

Benefits of LTPBR Practices

LTPBR practices are often less expensive than high-tech methods. There is no need for heavy equipment to create these structures and most can be adapted to be built using locally available resources. Once in place, LTPBR structures allow natural processes to take over and usually do not require additional maintenance. LTPBR practices can improve the ecological and hydrological functioning of an area, increasing water retention, improving soil quality, and increasing biodiversity.

LATER THIS SPRING, WCNRD WILL BE OFFERING A LOW-TECH PROCESS-BASED RESTORATION WORKSHOP (Dates yet to be decided)

April

Series of virtual presentations covering:

- Reading riverscapes
- Degradation challenges
 - Structure types
 - Project planning
- Working with contractors
 - Collaboration



May (week of the 20th)

2-Day fieldwork component:

Hands-on demonstration of techniques

- Build a variety of structures
- Use a variety of materials

This workshop is open to anyone, with an emphasis on contractors and others looking to perform or lead similar projects.

For more information contact the Weston County Natural Resource District at
(307) 746-3264 x4 or ccarter.wcnrd@gmail.com

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. 111

Erin Whitcher westoncountynrd@gmail.com
Administrative Assistant (307) 746-3264 ext.4

District Hours

7:30 am to 4:30 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

Jeremy Fultz (307) 941-2446
National Wild Turkey Federation
Cooperative Forester jeremy.fultz@usda.gov



Find us online!

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

westoncountynrd.org

You can also connect with us on social media:

 facebook.com/westoncountynrd

 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

Deadlines:

Photo Contest Submissions Due.....Feb 14th

Conservation Cost-Share Application.....Feb. 28th

Reserve a Well Water Test.....March 4th

Rain Barrel Pre-Order.....April 4th

Seedling Tree Order.....April 4th

Community Ed. Classes.....1/30, 2/20, 3/6 @ USDA Building Conference Room – 6 p.m.
(more details on the next page)

Well Water Testing Day.....March 18th

Community Education

Classes will be held at the
USDA Service Center Conference Room
1225 Washington Blvd, Newcastle

Hardening Your Home Against Wildfire - 1/30 @ 6 p.m.

Learn strategies you can implement to reduce the likelihood of ignition of your home and property.

Harvesting and Using Rainwater - 2/20 @ 6 p.m.

Learn how to use rain barrels and other collection methods to harvest rainwater and use it safely and efficiently to water your lawn and garden.

Xeriscaping - 3/6 @ 6 p.m.

Learn how to use native and drought-tolerant plants and other strategies to reduce water use in your yard and landscape.

Register online at

<https://ewc.wy.edu/community-education/community-education-workforce-registration/>
 or call the EWC office 307-746-3603

Please register in advance; classes will be canceled if no one has registered for them.



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

E-Newsletter

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

March 13th is Know Your Well Day and March 9-15 is National Groundwater Awareness Week
 Visit knowyourwell.org or wellowner.org for resources related to water well systems and groundwater

Spring Well Water Testing

Call us to reserve kits by 3PM on March 4th

Pick up your kits March 10th-14th

Collect and return samples March 18th

Bring samples to the WCNRD office in Newcastle by 10 a.m. or Upton City Hall by 11 a.m.

This test checks for presence of bacteria/E. coli and levels of nitrate and nitrite, sulfate, and total dissolved solids.

**WCNRD will fully cover the cost of this test.
 Kits will be limited to 1 per household, per testing date.**

**For additional water testing, check out our new Lab Test Cost Share program.
<https://westoncountynrd.org/lab-testing/>**

Call our office to reserve your kit or for more information

307-746-3264x4

Wild Horse Management

By Ben Carter, WCNRD Intern

From national treasure to national pest, there are many varying opinions about wild horses. Wild horse populations on public land have exceeded levels that the land can healthily support, leading to the degradation of many key aspects of the environment, making it clear that we need to act.

The wild horses that exist in North America today are descended from ancestors that were domesticated, some more recently than others. If “wild” is defined as an animal having no domesticated ancestors, then “feral” or “free-ranging” would be more accurate terms to describe these modern horses. Regardless of what they are called, the overpopulation of feral horses has presented itself in many negative ways. Areas where feral horses have been excluded show two to three times the amount of native cover grass compared to areas with horses. This is due to the horses grazing the land year-round, not giving it proper time to recover. This overgrazing creates patches of bare ground, which are created when the horses consume the cover plants and then trample the ground. This behavior compacts the soil so much that water and seeds cannot penetrate it. This degrades the soil, making it difficult for native plants to reestablish themselves, increasing the likelihood that more aggressive invasive plants, such as cheatgrass, will gain a foothold.

Due to protections and a lack of natural predators, human intervention is required to hit and maintain acceptable management levels (AMLs). The BLM sets these AMLs for herd management areas on public lands based on the average amount of forage the land will produce each year. Management officials use these numbers to determine how many animals the land can support in a healthy manner. When populations exceed these levels, like we are currently seeing, problems arise. In a report made to Congress in 2018, the BLM determined that the population of free-ranging horses on public land far exceeded the AML on most herd management areas. Like any animal, overstocking on land that is not given sufficient time to recuperate leads to environmental degradation, which has numerous negative effects.

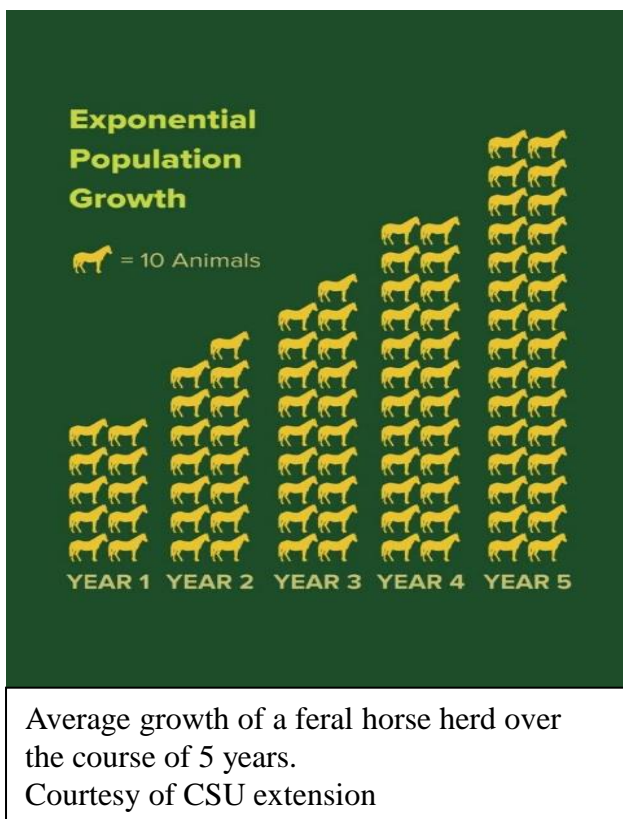


Photo courtesy of Jean Beaufort

Another problem is the effect wild horses have on wildlife. Horses can outcompete elk, deer, bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, and other wildlife for food and water, sometimes forcing those animals out of their native ranges. Another animal that the overpopulation of wild horses affects is the sage grouse. When feral horses are at proper AMLs, survival rates of sage grouse stay relatively the same as areas with no exposure to horses. However, in areas where wild horses exceed the AML, studies documented that sage grouse survival declined at all stages by as much as 18%.

Managing the population of feral horses is essential for conserving the western environment. Choosing not to manage is essentially killing the environment, wildlife, and wild horses with kindness. If left untouched, the current population of 83,000 free-roaming horses will continue to grow by a rate of 20% each year, causing destruction to wildlife, vegetation, and ecosystems. Many different forms of population management have been proposed, each with its own benefits and shortcomings. In order to fully address this problem, wild horse advocates and management officials must come to a compromise on what the proper steps are to take from here.

This article is an abridgment of a research paper WCNRD Intern Ben Carter wrote as an assignment for school. Contact the district for a list of sources cited in the research paper.





2025 Seedling Tree Order Form

Conditions of Sale:

1. No plant purchased from the WCNRD or their distributors may be resold as a living plant
2. Payment must accompany order. Refunds will not be given for cancelled orders after 3/1/2025.
3. If trees ordered are not available, a refund will be issued, unless a substitution is requested
4. Nursery staff and the WCNRD are not responsible for errors in inventory count
5. **NO WARRANTY, EXPRESSED, OR IMPLIED, IS MADE BY WCNRD OF THE SEEDLING STOCK.**

For office use only Order # _____
 Date received _____
 Amt. paid \$ _____
 CK# _____

I have read and agree with the above "Conditions of Sale."

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Applicant Name and/or Organization _____ In-District Out-of-District

Primary Contact's Name _____ Phone # _____

Email _____ Alternate Phone # _____

Mailing Address: _____

Orders must be received with payment by April 4th, 2025.

Nursery	Species/Variety	# of plants	Total
Subtotal			
%5 sales tax			
TOTAL			

Orders and payments can also be submitted through our online store. Our online store also offers species information and planting recommendations.

www.westoncountynrd.org/shop

or call us at (307) 746-3264 x4

Species	Variety	Size	In-District	Out-of-District	# of plants	Subtotal
Towner State Nursery – Sold in Units of 50 – Plug or Bare root						
Trees						
Black Hills Spruce	Bare Root	6-15"	\$66.00	\$100.00		
Black Hills Spruce	Plug	8-15"	\$82.00	\$130.00		
Colorado Blue Spruce	Bare Root	6-15"	\$66.00	\$100.00		
Colorado Blue Spruce	Plug	8-15"	\$82.00	\$130.00		
Eastern Red Cedar	Bare Root	8-15"	\$66.00	\$100.00		
Eastern Red Cedar	Plug	8-15"	\$82.00	\$130.00		
Ponderosa Pine	Bare Root	6-10"	\$60.00	\$90.00		
Ponderosa Pine	Plug	8-15"	\$82.00	\$130.00		
Rocky Mountain Juniper	Bare Root	8-15"	\$66.00	\$100.00		
Rocky Mountain Juniper	Plug	8-15"	\$82.00	\$130.00		
Siberian Larch	Plug	8-12"	\$82.00	\$130.00		
Sand Cherry	Bare Root	12-18"	\$60.00	\$90.00		
Lincoln Oakes Nursery – Sold in Units of 25 – Bare Root Only						
Trees						
Black Walnut		10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Boxelder		10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Bur Oak		10-24"	\$46.00	\$70.00		
Golden Willow		10-24"	\$46.00	\$70.00		
Hackberry		10-24"	\$46.00	\$70.00		
Native Cottonwood		10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Shrubs						
Buffaloberry		10-24"	\$46.00	\$70.00		
Caragana		10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Chokecherry	Common, Schubert	10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Crabapple	Dolgo	10-24"	\$46.00	\$70.00		
Black Currant		10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Golden Currant		10-24"	\$46.00	\$70.00		
Juneberry/Serviceberry		10-24"	\$46.00	\$70.00		
Lilac	Common, Villosa	10-24"	\$46.00	\$70.00		
Nanking Cherry		10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Red Prairie Plum		10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Russian Almond		10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Sumac	Skunkbush, Smooth	10-24"	\$46.00	\$70.00		
Wolfberry		10-24"	\$40.00	\$60.00		
Great Plains Nursery – Single Potted Plants						
Serviceberry	Autumn Brilliance	#1 pot	\$32.00	\$48.00		
Hackberry		#1 pot	\$32.00	\$48.00		
Ginkgo Biloba	Maidenhair	#1 pot	\$32.00	\$48.00		
Black Walnut		#1 pot	\$32.00	\$48.00		
Currant	Black, Gold	#1 pot	\$32.00	\$48.00		
Oak	Chinkapin, Hybrid	#1 pot	\$32.00	\$48.00		
Japanese Tree Lilac		#1 pot	\$32.00	\$48.00		
Western Sand Cherry		#1 pot	\$32.00	\$48.00		
Nannyberry		#1 pot	\$30.00	\$45.00		

More varieties are available online. If you want a specific tree or shrub not listed here or would like a different size, contact us!

WCNRD Receives Grant for StoryWalk®

Back in September, WCNRD Office Administrator Erin Darlington-Whitcher applied for a grant from the Wyoming Community Foundation, requesting \$10,000 to fund a set of permanent StoryWalk® displays at Centennial Park in Newcastle. In December, WCNRD was notified that we were awarded the requested amount. This funding will allow us to purchase a set of display frames and the materials needed to install them. It will also cover the purchase of a heavy-duty laminator and the materials to prepare a small catalog of books for display.

Once installed, this permanent StoryWalk® will provide WCNRD with new outreach and education opportunities and local families with a new activity that encourages outdoor exercise and literacy. The great thing about the StoryWalk® program is that it offers countless opportunities for community participation. For example, individuals, businesses, or organizations can suggest or donate a book, help create a supplemental activity such as a scavenger hunt, sponsor small prizes, or help sponsor or host events such as book reveals.

We are coordinating with the City of Newcastle and several partner organizations to plan the installation. We hope to hold a volunteer workday sometime in late spring/early summer. If you are interested in assisting with the installation, want to suggest a book, or would like more information about the StoryWalk® program, call or email us. 307-746-3264x4 or westoncountynrd@gmail.com



Example StoryWalk® display.
Photo courtesy of Barking Dog Exhibits.

Take our Rental Equipment Interest Survey

We want to know what kind of rental equipment would benefit our members the most.

Scan the QR code to respond to our online survey,
or fill out a paper copy the next time you stop by the district office.



Now taking rain barrel pre-orders

WCNRD will be placing another bulk order for
55-gallon rain barrels

Call or email us by **4/4/25** to get on the pre-order list.
307-746-3264x4 or westoncountynrd@gmail.com

Price per item (sales tax included)

payment due at pickup

District Cost-Share: \$52.50

The cost-share rate is available only for district
members purchasing barrels for personal use.

If you are a Weston County resident but not in the district, or if
you want to purchase barrels to resell, you can still purchase
barrels through us but you won't qualify for the cost share.
Cost per item will be \$57.50 + shipping (to be determined).

If you are a resident of Crook County or Custer County, or are
part of Clear Creek Conservation District, please contact your
local conservation district to order a rain barrel from them.

We are working together to place a bulk order.



2025 Photo Contest

Submit photos, entry forms, and model release forms by emailing
them to

westoncountynrd@gmail.com

Dates

- **February 14** - Submissions are due
- **February 17** - Voting begins on Facebook
- **February 28** - Voting ends
- **March 3** - Winners announced



Categories

All photos should portray natural resources located within Weston County.

- **Wildlife**- wild animals, including invertebrates
- **Agriculture**- ag practices, livestock, gardening
- **Landscape**- land, sky, bodies of water, groups of plants
- **People**- humans interacting with natural resources
- **Macro**- close-ups of small subjects, so they appear larger-than-life in the final image

Visit westoncountynrd.org/about-wcnrd/gallery/ to see the
2024 entries, to download entry and model release forms,
and to read the contest rules, terms, and conditions.



Weston County Natural Resource District

1225 Washington Blvd. Suite 3

Newcastle, WY 82701

(307) 746-3264, ext. 4

westoncountynrd@gmail.com

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

January 2025 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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