



## WyRED Was A Smashing Success This Year!

*Submitted by Marji Patz*



This year WyRed was held in Casper June 20-24, 2011 and was sponsored by the Natrona County Conservation District. Lisa Ogden, with the Natrona County Conservation District, Tyrone Fittje and Brock Burch from Natrona High School, and Anita Bartlett with the Powder River Conservation District (Kaycee) created an excellent Program for our youth. Astrid Martinez, NRCS WY State Soil Scientist assisted throughout the week with Soils information as well as provide many of our prizes for the week's close. Everet Bainter, Rory Becker, Brian Jensen, Mary Schrader, Dennis Sun, and many others assisted in teaching the youngsters this year.

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#### President:

Summer Schulz, 307-367-5346,  
[sschulz@blm.gov](mailto:sschulz@blm.gov)

#### President-Elect:

Ben Bonella, 307-347-2456 ext 106,  
[ben.bonella@wy.usda.gov](mailto:ben.bonella@wy.usda.gov)

#### Past President:

Marji Patz, 307-754-9301 ext 118,  
[marji.patz@wy.usda.gov](mailto:marji.patz@wy.usda.gov)

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[rsprentall@fs.fed.us](mailto:rsprentall@fs.fed.us)

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Mary Schrader, 307-233-6762,  
[mary.schrader@wy.usda.gov](mailto:mary.schrader@wy.usda.gov)

#### NW Council Rep:

Karen Clause, 307-367-2257 ext 103,  
[karen.clause@wy.usda.gov](mailto:karen.clause@wy.usda.gov)

#### SE Council Rep:

Jessica Crowder, 307-777-7024,  
[jcrowder@state.wy.us](mailto:jcrowder@state.wy.us)

#### SW Council Rep:

Justin McConkey, 307-782-6555,  
[jmcconkey@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmcconkey@fs.fed.us)

#### Newsletter Editor:

Courtney Thomas,  
[WySRMeditor@gmail.com](mailto:WySRMeditor@gmail.com)

Dan Rodgers with the University of Wyoming is one of the long standing teachers for WyRED and he put together a great Anatomy lesson and quizzes for the week. He works tirelessly throughout the week to assist the participants in collecting and mounting vegetation specimens. All activities lead to the Camp awards, which were presented to the following:

**Top Plant Press** – Kellyne Doyle (Worland), w/ Honorable mention to Karyn Rieger (Worland)

**Top Camper** – Karyn Rieger (Worland)

**Most Improved** – Tie with Matthew Dillon (Shoshone) and River Wright (Mountain View); Honorable mention to Clay Loraas (Casper)

Overall, it was an excellent week and we are excited for next year which will be the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WYRED. This year's Contest had over 40 participants. They were quizzed on anatomy, Soils and other Resource questions, 24 plants (common names, origin, grazing response, season of growth, and lifespan), three range sites and ranch management problem. It was a close contest with the winners as follows:

**Teams:**

**1<sup>st</sup>:** 1152 Points – Worland FFA: Seth Peterson, Karyn Rieger, Kellyn Doyle



**Dan Rodgers instructs WyRED campers on Plant Anatomy.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** 1101 Points – Moorcroft FFA: Kenny Sisson, Cole Fitzgerald, Trevor Gray, Will West

**3<sup>rd</sup>:** 1041 Points – Douglas 4-H: Morgan Hays, Jaycee Hays, Trace Hays, Devlyn Green.

**Individuals:**

**Professionals:** 1<sup>st</sup>: Misty Hayes – Douglas Forest Service 2<sup>nd</sup>: Grace Anderson – Worland High School

**Open Adults:** 1<sup>st</sup>: Kate Richardson, Worland 2<sup>nd</sup>: Kyle Reedy, Stevens Point Wisconsin 3<sup>rd</sup>: Jonathon Teske, New Mexico State University.

**Youth (14yrs and up):** 1<sup>st</sup>: Seth Petersen (Worland) 2<sup>nd</sup>: Trevor Gray (Moorcroft) and Morgan Hays (Douglas) 3<sup>rd</sup>: Kenny Sisson (Moorcroft)

**Range Riders (10-13 yrs):** 1<sup>st</sup>: Trace Hayes (Douglas) 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jaycee Hays (Douglas)

*Ben Bonella and Marjū Patz would like to thank everyone who participates and helps each year to make WYRED happen. It is an excellent program and we hope to continue it on for many years to come!*

# Rangeland Research

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*Submitted by Justin Derner, Research Leader-Rangeland Scientist*

*High Plains Research Station*

## **Mountain plover conservation in shortgrass rangeland**

The mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) is a species of significant conservation concern in the western Great Plains. David Augustine, ARS ecologist with the Rangeland Resources Research Unit (Cheyenne, WY/Fort Collins, CO) collaborated with the USFS Pawnee National Grassland (PNG) to evaluate habitats selected by mountain plovers in order to inform potential grazing and fire management strategies for this species. The PNG was historically considered a key breeding stronghold for this species in the United States, prior to dramatic population declines that occurred over the past 4 decades. David demonstrated that while mountain plovers are rare in moderately-grazed rangeland that comprises most of the region, mountain plovers occur at high densities on recent prescribed burns and active black-tailed prairie dog colonies. Findings indicate that disturbances such as fire and prairie dogs combined with moderate grazing may be essential for creating mountain plover habitat, and are helping guide management of PNG to recover populations of the species.

Supporting paper:

**Augustine, DJ.** 2011. Habitat selection by mountain plovers in shortgrass steppe. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 75:297-304.

## **Financial Costs and Producer Risks with Cross-fencing Rangelands**

One of the most common practices used on rangelands for management is the addition of cross-fences to provide management flexibility, intensify management, and reduce spot grazing through more uniform use of pastures. Justin Derner, ARS rangeland scientist in the Rangeland Resources Research Unit (Cheyenne, WY/Fort Collins, CO) in cooperation with a private consultant and the Environmental Defense Fund determined initial costs (materials and installation), longer-term costs associated with maintenance of the cross-fences, and the influence of public financial incentives through the Farm Bill on total costs and financial risk to the land manager as he generally has to increase stocking rates to increase economic returns per unit land area. We estimated increases of 9-16% in stocking rates for the next twenty years to maintain break-even conditions for land managers associated with increased costs attributed to the installation and maintenance of the cross-fencing, which can compromise the long-term sustainability of rangeland resources.

The newly updated Wyoming Section Web Site is now available for all your Wyoming SRM Section needs! Please visit us at

[www.rangelands.org/wyoming](http://www.rangelands.org/wyoming)

for the latest and greatest section news and information.



Supporting paper:

Knight, K.B., T.P. Toombs, and J.D. Derner. 2011. Cross-Fencing on private US rangelands: Financial costs and producer risks. *Rangelands* 33(2):41-44.

**Do we have more bare ground than we thought?** Percent bare ground is a measure the amount of bare ground exposed to the erosive impact of rain and wind and is therefore an important indicator of the ecological health of rangelands. Terry Booth, ARS rangeland scientist in the Rangeland Resources Research Unit (Cheyenne, WY/Fort Collins, CO), working with USDI-BLM Wyoming State Office found new evidence that the line-point intercept, a commonly used rangeland monitoring method, undervalues the amount of bare ground measured on rangelands. They also found that a new image-based method provides a verifiable measure of bare ground that can be more accurately compared over time to assess long-term ecological trends. Image-based monitoring methods developed are replacing, or being used with, line-point intercept in many rangeland-monitoring situations and the image-based methods are now taught to natural resource students in the Department of Renewable Resources at the University of Wyoming and at other western universities.

Supporting paper: Cagney, J., S. E. Cox, and D. T. Booth. 2011. Comparison of point intercept and image analysis for monitoring rangeland transects. *Rangeland Ecology & Management* 64:309-315.

These papers are available on the web at [www.rrru.ars.usda.gov](http://www.rrru.ars.usda.gov)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**WYOMING ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS AND WYOMING  
SECTION SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT  
2011 JOINT CONVENTION  
NOVEMBER 15-17, 2011**

**Call now to make your reservations for the upcoming WACD/SRM Joint Convention. There are blocks of rooms at each of the following hotels:  
Inn at Lander Best Western - Lander 307-332-2847 Ask for WACD block  
Holiday Inn Express - Lander 307-332-4005 Group code: WCD  
Pronghorn Lodge - Lander 307-332-3940 Ask for WACD block  
Hampton Inn - Riverton 307-856-3500 Group code: WAC  
Rooms will be released November 1, 2011**



# WLCI Partners Spotlight

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*Submitted by Serena Baker*

This spring, the Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District (SERCD) hosted a public information event focusing on long range conservation planning and resources available in Carbon County. At this event the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) Coordination Team and eight other contributors provided informational booths and educational materials describing what their respective organization are doing and can provide to Carbon County conservation actions. The nine booths were sponsored by SERCD, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Bureau of Land Management Rawlins Field Office, Wyoming Wildlife Federation, Sleeping Giant Inc., Carbon County Planning & Zoning, Power Company of Wyoming and WLCI.

There were also six presenters: Arla Strasser (SERCD), Terry Weickum (Carbon County Commissioner), Sid Fox (Director – Carbon County Planning and Development), Gus Connelly (President/CEO, Sleeping Giant Industries, Inc.), Karl Osvald (Senior Geologist, BLM Reservoir Management Group) and Gary Miller (Director, Land and Environment, Power Company of Wyoming LLC and TransWest Express LLC). Presented topics ranged from mission statements, on the ground actions, statute requirements, new reclamation materials, Geographic Information Systems resource internet tools to renewable energy development. All in all this was a very informative and educational event, fulfilling one of SERCD's missions of "outreach and education" by providing a basis for well-informed and locally led conservation.



**Coordination Team members Jim Wasseen and Justin Caudill man WLCI's booth.**

- **District Operations** - Maintain accountability of all public funds and provide professional services in a timely and responsible manner
- **Trees** – Promote the wise use of their tree resources
- **Range** – Provide expertise and guidance to promote healthy rangelands
- **Water Quantity** – Promote the conservation and availability of water for all beneficial uses
- **Water Quality** – Provide leadership to maintain or improve the quality of water within all watersheds in the SEDCD
- **Environmental Policy** - Participate in a cooperative effort in resource enhancement and protection
- **Education** – Provide natural resource education
- **Soils** – Promote the conservation of soil
- **Wildlife** – Promote the sustainability of healthy populations and their contributions to the economic stability of the District

*Serena Baker is the Public Affairs Specialist/WLCI Communications Chair for the Bureau of Land Management in the High Desert District Office.*

# QUARTERLY RANGE PLANT SPOTLIGHT

*Karen J. Clause, Rangeland Management Specialist USDA-NRCS*

## BASIN WILDRYE

*Leymus cinereus (syn. Elymus cinereus)*

**Plant Symbol = LECI4**

Basin wildrye is a long-lived, tall, perennial cool season bunchgrass native to Wyoming. It is common to the Intermountain regions of the western United States. In Wyoming, it is found on deep soils of various textures in the higher elevations and along ephemeral drainages, cottonwood bottoms, and sub-irrigated riparian areas in the lower elevations.

**Description:** Basin wildrye is most easily recognized by its size, which can reach 3 feet in diameter and 3 to 6 feet in height. In addition, its leaves are flat and wide (up to ¾ inch) with long pointed auricles, which are tiny hook-like features that wrap around the stem where the leaf and stem join (collar), a common feature to most grasses in the “wheatgrass” tribe (Triticeae). Seed heads are a spike (no branching, all flowers are attached to the main stem) 6 to 10 inches long.

**Uses:** Basin wildrye is preferred forage for many classes of livestock and wildlife. Its nutritious and abundant forage are an excellent food source for many animals, and its large size provides excellent cover for small and large mammals and birds as well as nesting cover for sage grouse. Because of its high protein at maturity (7 to 8%), it is an important winter forage source for elk and cattle.



Protein levels can reach 20% during the growing season.

Basin wildrye is a superb plant to consider for reclamation and erosion control due to its drought resistance, fibrous root system, and fair seedling vigor. It is also useful as a barrier for wind (and snow) control.

Season ↓   Species →	Cattl e	Hors es	Shee p	El k	Dee r	Antelo pe
Spring	P	P	P	P	D	D
Summe r	D	D	D	D	U	U
Fall	D	D	U	D	U	U
Winter	D	D	U	D	U	U

P= Preferred; D=Desirable; U=Undesirable

**Management:** Basin wildrye is very sensitive to spring/summer grazing due to elevated growing points which are 10-12 inches above the ground. Therefore, at least 10 inches of stubble should

remain following grazing during the growing season. Basin wildrye is ideal for providing wind protection in winter calving pastures because of its height, nutrition, and ability to withstand heavy grazing and trampling in its dormant state. It is not recommended for haying because harvesting below a 10 inch stubble height will eliminate the stand. Once harvested, it produces very little regrowth.

References: USDA NRCS Idaho State Office & National Plant Data Center

PLANTS database, <http://plants.usda.gov>

NRCS eFOTG, Ecological Site Descriptions

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Northern Rockies Ranch  
Practicum course.

[www.ranchpracticum.com](http://www.ranchpracticum.com)

The Agenda, applications, and other info is available on the website. It will be held in Powel, WY at NW College. Dates are Aug 30-31 Sept 27-28 Oct 19-20 Dec 6-7.

Please check the WY SRM website:

[www.rangelands.org/wyoming](http://www.rangelands.org/wyoming)

to find the auction donation form for the upcoming 2011 Joint Convention of the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts and the Society for Range Management.

We will again be doing a live internet auction in conjunction with our event. The sooner we receive your items, the more advance promotion we can do. Please send the completed form, along with a separate photo of your auction item to Kelly at [kbrown@tribcsp.com](mailto:kbrown@tribcsp.com) as soon as possible.

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*THE DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER  
2011 NEWSLETTER WILL BE  
OCTOBER 15, 2011.*

*Check out the photos of the  
WyRED Award recipients on the  
website, too!*