

Uinta County Connection

Uinta County
Conservation
District

July 2006

Outdoor Workshop to be held August 14th and 15th



Participants learn about soil texturing at the 2004 Outdoor Workshop.

Mark your calendars for August 14th and 15th! The Conservation District is hosting its third annual Outdoor Classroom Workshop. This will be a great opportunity for any and all local educators to gain one professional development credit while spending time outdoors!

Day 1 is jam packed with unique experiences- first we will visit a forest site that has been recently burned to take a look at forest fire ecology, discussed by District Forester, Dana Stone. Next we will explore nature journaling, a method of tying students to nature through written word, art, photography,

plant collections, and most importantly, observation. Kerri Sabey will then be leading a hands-on study of water quality. We will learn to make sense of pH, dissolved oxygen, flow, and many other measurements of the environmental health of a stream. Lastly, we will head to the Sims sheep ranch, where Shaun Sims will give us an idea of the daily routine of a rancher.

On day 2, a representative of Project WILD will spend the day with us at the Lyman Town Hall. Project WILD is a great program for getting kids thinking about local wildlife and nature through hands on projects provided in continuously updated activity guides.

Registration is required, though the workshop is free. Contact the Conservation District office at 787-3794 x4 to register. Lunch will be provided both days. If you know anyone who might be interested please let them know!

Former NRCS Employee Comes Back to Bridger Valley

In 2002, Jeff Lewis left the Lyman Field Office to begin his career as a District Conservationist in Star Valley. During his 4 1/2 year absence, Jeff served as the District Conservationist in Star Valley for 1 year, the Farson Field Office for 1 1/2 years, and then moved with the office to Rock Springs and has been there for the past 2 years as the District Conservationist.

Due to Jeff's technical abilities in dealing with irrigation, salinity, and large scale projects, he was asked to fill the vacancy created when the former District Conservationist, Adrian Hunolt, left. In the Big Sandy area, Jeff will still be responsible for two pipeline projects that total 13.5 million dollars in federal and state cost-share. Jeff will also be involved with the Manila salinity area and the producers in McKinnon that are involved in a large pipeline project.

When asked why he came back, Jeff stated that he has always enjoyed working in the Bridger Valley and welcomed the opportunity to come back. "I made quite a few good friends in the Bridger Valley and over the past 4 1/2 years, I didn't get to do as many things with them due to not living here. It will be good to see all of them again and to meet new friends and producers."

The Conservation District is excited to have Jeff back in the office. He brings with him some great technical experience and we look forward to working with him to serve the producers in Uinta County. Welcome back Jeff!

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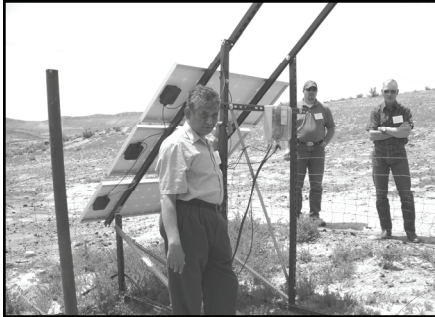
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Smart Irrigation

July has been exceptionally hot with very little precipitation. Let's all be "Water Wise" by following these few simple steps:

- Monitor soil saturation
- Water at the optimum time of day to reduce evaporation
- Adapt watering schedules to weather and seasonal changes
- Water only as needed and inspect your system each month for leaks.

Solar Pump Workshop a Success



Dr. Sadrul Ula answers questions from the group as he shows off the Sims Livestock solar pump system installed through the Governors Solar Pump Initiative of 2005.

On June 28th, Dr. Sadrul Ula, Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Wyoming and Steve Fletcher, Staff Engineer, came to Lyman to present information on the benefits of solar and wind stock water pumping. We spent the morning discussing solar energy and how a ranch or farm could benefit from it. We also talked about designing and installing a solar pumping system. Dr. Ula also brought along a "portable" solar pump system that had been mounted on a trailer for use at several different well locations. Following the morning discussions and lunch, the group headed out to visit a solar pumping system that had been installed on the Sims Ranch through the Governors Solar Pump Initiative of 2005. Shaun Sims gave a great presentation on the system and even showed the group that it really does pump water! He said his system has

worked flawlessly and has been a huge benefit to that area of his ranch.

Dr. Ula and Steve Fletcher mentioned that the University of Wyoming is willing to assist any producer interested in installing a solar or wind pumping system with design and installation information. The Conservation District also has funding available to cost share on systems that meet the criteria. If you are interested in installing a solar pump system and would like financial assistance to do so, please contact the Conservation District. For technical assistance, feel free to contact Dr. Ula or Steve Fletcher at UW, at 307-766-6268 or 2279.



It really does pump water!! Shaun Sims demonstrates the ability of his new solar pump system to supply water to his livestock.

UCCD has Funding Available for Remediation of Malfunctioning Septic Systems in the Blacks Fork/Smiths Fork Watershed

UCCD recently completed an application phase for inadequate septic systems in the Blacks Fork/Smiths Fork watershed. Several projects at risk for contributing e.coli bacteria to surface water were chosen for funding and will be implemented this fall. Although the deadline for that phase of the project has passed, UCCD will continue to take applications and fund those projects that meet the criteria until all funding is expended.

The Blacks Fork and Smiths Fork Rivers are both included on the 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies, developed by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ), for exceedances of e.coli bacteria. The Uinta County Conservation District and the Blacks Fork/Smiths Fork Water Quality Steering Committee are concerned with the potential human health risk associated with e.coli and are being proactive in educating and offering financial assistance to those at the most risk for contaminating surface water. This program is an opportunity to voluntarily get your septic system up to code with monetary assistance. If you are issued a notice of violation by WDEQ, you will no longer be eligible to apply for cost-share funds, but will still be required to remove the source of impairment at your own expense. Please contact the Conservation District for more information on this and other cost share programs.

We have a new logo!



2007 EQIP Changes

By: Jeff Lewis

Another year has almost passed and once again the time is almost upon us for another EQIP sign-up.

Traditionally, NRCS has handled the sign-up and application process through one-on-one meetings with producers as well as mailing applications to those that are interested in signing up .

This year the EQIP sign-up is going to be handled a little differently. Although the sign-up will more than likely be the same as it has been in the past, the ranking process is going to be different. This year, the ranking will be done online instead of using a paper copy as in the past. The one big difference this year is that all of your farm records must be up-to-date. If they are not, the ranking process will stop and it will not be allowed to continue until the records are updated.

It is very important that if you are thinking about signing up for the 2007 EQIP program, that you have your records on your entire farm updated. This means if you have bought or sold land, changed leases, etc. and have not notified the Farm Service Agency (FSA), you need

to get that done in the near future.

Again, if your farm records are not current, the ranking process will not be completed and your application will not be processed.

There are going to be some changes in the ranking factors also. There are basically three levels to the ranking criteria. They are the national level criteria, the state level criteria and the local level criteria. The national and state criteria will make up the majority of the points that can be obtained. The local criteria will weigh in approximately 25% of the total points.

As of yet, we have not heard exactly what the national and state ranking criteria will be, or when the sign-up will be. Traditionally, the sign-up is for two or three weeks in November. As soon as NRCS knows the sign-up period, there will be radio announcements stating the sign-up dates. You can also check at the local USDA Service Center in the Lyman Town Hall if you don't hear anything on the radio or see an announcement in the local newspapers.

Upcoming Education Events

UCCD will be setting up our booth at the **Uinta County Fair on August 1st**. We will be there all week with a game for the kids, information about our programs, our Ground Water Flow Model, and plenty of goodies to hand out, so please stop by!

August 14th and 15th we are hosting an **Outdoor Classroom Workshop**. This will be a great opportunity for local educators to gain one professional development credit while spending time outdoors! (see article on the front page)

The 5th graders at **Ft. Bridger Elementary** will soon be packing up their camping gear and heading out to **Youth Camp** (September 14th and 15th). The youth will be learning from Wyo-

oming Game and Fish, Wyoming State Forestry Division, US Forest Service, Uinta County School District #4, and us! We are planning a crime scene investigation game to solve the mysteries of animal tracks and signs. This will be a great way for the 5th graders to enjoy the outdoors as they kick off the new school year, and we are very excited to be a part of the event.

In the mean time, the district is working on developing a website. We have a lot of planning ahead of us, and we are determined to create an easily accessible and informative site. If you have suggestions, or ideas of things you would like to see on our website, now is the time to let us know! Call Tina Price at any time at (307) 787 - 3794 X4.

BUSY BEES

by Tina Price



Most people feel a little antsy when they hear a rather loud buzz and see the classic yellow, flying torpedo they know comes equipped with a painful weapon. But have you ever let your curiosity overcome that fear just long enough to watch a bee work? If you haven't before, try it! Amazingly, most people don't realize that bees rarely sting if they are away from their hive, so long as they are not stepped on or swatted at! My great uncle was a bee farmer for years, and had school children come by the busload to hear the latest buzz. He had become immune to the pain of their sting after years of showing children how to correctly remove a stinger. He literally had to force a bee to sting him by squeezing it against his palm! So, sting aside, what's the point of watching bees anyway? For one thing, honey bee pollination in the US is valued around \$15 billion each year via pollinating crops, and producing honey and wax. Remember, too, your garden is flourishing in part due to these tiny creatures. They accomplish this task, as

well as bringing pollen back to feed the hive, by collecting pollen in the tiny hairs all along their bodies. They then use little comb-like structures on their legs to scrape the pollen off of their bodies and into their "pollen baskets" which are tiny sacs on either leg. A bee will also use its jaws to scrape pollen directly out of a flower, add a touch of honey from the hive to moisten it, and maneuver this tiny ball into its baskets. Also, did you know that all worker bees are female? To top off the mystery of a job well done, think about this: to produce only 2 pounds of honey, one bee will have traveled far enough to circle the globe 2-3 times! So the next time you see a bee, stop to smell the pollen with her, and think of all the wonderful work she does in her lifetime!



Uinta County Conservation District

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Calendar of Events

August

- 1-5 Uinta County Fair at the Evanston Fair Grounds
- 9 First day to file for Board election. Contact UCCD for more information
- 10 UCCD Board of Supervisors Meeting, 8:00 pm at the Lyman Town Hall. The public is welcome to attend.
- 14-15 Outdoor Workshop, call the UCCD office for more information or to register.
- 28-29 Governors Natural Resource Tour in Uinta and Lincoln Counties.

September

- 4 Labor Day, District office closed
- 6 UCCD to host Area V meeting at the Lyman Town Hall
- 14 UCCD Board of Supervisors Meeting, 8:00 pm at the Lyman Town Hall
- 14-15 Ft. Bridger Elementary Youth Camp