



QUINTA COUNTY *Connection*

Flood Preparation in Wyoming

As another winter draws to an end and the smell of spring is in the air, one can't help but welcome the new season. With the changing season and warming temperatures, following a winter deepened with above average snowpack, comes not only annual spring runoff but a compounded threat for flooding. Looking back to a year ago one might remember the above average mountainous snowfall coupled with sudden warm spring temperatures and the consequent flooding of numerous rivers and streams throughout the state. Newspapers headlined with pictures of the Wind River and Popo Agie as they flowed into streets, across pastures, and into barns taking bridges and roadways out as they made their course downstream. Localized flooding could even be seen in Uinta County for those living near the Bear River, Smiths Fork, Blacks Fork, and Henry's Fork. Some may be feeling deja vu as snowpack statewide this winter has once again been above normal. For instance, average total precipitation for the Upper Bear River and Lower Green River NRCS Snotel sites are at 135% and 122% respectively.

Flooding in Wyoming can be attributed to several factors including ice dropping into the rivers and creating ice jams, rapidly melting snowpack, and intense summer thunderstorms producing flash floods. The most severe flooding can occur when temperatures suddenly rise followed by spring rainstorms on top of a melting snowpack, as we witnessed in 2010. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) just released a Spring Snowmelt Flood Potential Outlook detailing what basins may be at risk for flooding. In our area the Upper Bear River basin is classified as high risk and other high risk basins across the state include the Upper North Platte and Laramie River. In anticipation of increased spring runoff, the state has been lowering all the reservoirs in the Platte River system.

Properties and homes most susceptible to flooding exist in low laying areas adjacent to streams and rivers where banks may be breached leading to localized inundation and an increased risk for damage to those properties and homes. Fast moving water and flood-

ing has the capability and force to change the course of a river which can quickly damage agricultural land and destroy bridges and utilities in its path. Flooding is a natural phenomenon and man is limited in the ability to control and prevent damages associated with flooding; however, there are preventative steps people can take to protect their property and help minimize these damages.

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COMING SOON!

Well Water Testing Day
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One step property owners can do to help assess the potential for flooding is to perform a simple flood risk assessment. Risk assessments for property can be completed by compiling knowledge and history of previous floods in the area, along with identification of old river beds and the relevance of flood plains. Additional assessment of where the property sits in relation to slope and topography aids in the determination of buildings and property vulnerable to flooding. One protective option for people living in flood prone areas is to invest in flood insurance for the property and their valuables. Flood insurance can help property owners offset costs and damages associated with flooding. Other preemptive actions that landowners can take before rising water in rivers and streams is a threat, is to remove and clear all debris from waterways that may be impeding the waters' natural flow. Tactical measures property owners can take include moving personal property to a safe place such as vehicles, equipment, livestock and removal of valuables from basements that may be affected by water. If rising water continues and the property is further threatened, landowners are left with more drastic measures such as protective dikes or sand bags around structures. Though dikes and sandbagging are generally used in emergency situations; landowners and communities adjacent to rivers should be prepared and know what to do in the case of a "100 year flood."



Water rising in the river eventually leads to subsequent rise in the sub water which may contribute to water seeping into basements and crawl spaces. Rising sub water and standing water in basements and crawl spaces creates immediate problems and can potentially result in structural problems to the concrete and building materials. When water comes into these locations, moisture creates an environment favorable for mold. Mold will persist in many building materials including insulation and drywall, which can lead to rotting plywood and other wood based materials. One should keep a close eye on basements and crawl spaces for rising water and be prepared to pump out water if an adequate drainage system does not exist.

The best thing property owners can do to help prevent damages and losses from flooding is to have a plan in place in the case flooding does occur. By being prepared, having a risk assessment, and knowledge of preemptive actions, landowners and home owners can save time and money in the long run. As warming temperatures and runoff from the slopes begins; communities should be aware of the changing weather conditions and watch for the rising water levels in the surrounding rivers and streams.



Final Rangeland Workshop

This winter the Uinta County Conservation District hosted a series of three grazing workshops. Landowners and producers gained insight into a wide-range of strategies to manage the natural resources we depend upon. The workshops focused on rangeland and grazing management and provided producers and landowners with the opportunities and the knowledge to improve our natural resources while increasing profitability of individ-

ual operations. The fourth and final workshop will take place on June 29th as participants spend the day in the field putting the knowledge gained in previous workshops to use. The field exercises will include demonstrations on the basics of monitoring and descriptions of materials and equipment needed to start collecting and interpreting monitoring data. In addition, the Uinta County Weed and Pest will be on site explaining the many herbicides used to control noxious weeds, perform a backpack demonstration and explain how to properly calibrate herbicides and chemicals. In the second workshop, the Lawson aerator was discussed for pasture-

land and rangeland uses. At the final workshop, individuals will be able to see a demonstration of this equipment which is available for rent through the district. Check your mail for flyers, visit our website at www.uintacountycd.com, or keep your eye out at local businesses for more details on site location and time. Don't forget to [RSVP to assure enough lunch for all participants.](#) We look forward to having you all there on [June 29th](#) for our last session of the year. Previous workshop attendance not required to attend final workshop.

**Workshop is free, register at
(307) 747-8223 by June 24**



Well Water Testing Day

As a private well owner, you probably use groundwater for doing your family’s laundry, drinking, cooking, bathing and watering your garden. Most private wells provide a clean, safe supply of water; however, contaminants can pollute private wells and unfortunately you cannot see, smell or taste most of them. EPA regulations that protect public drinking water systems do not apply to privately owned wells. As a result, YOU are responsible for making sure your water is safe.

The Uinta County Conservation District is holding a Well Water Testing Day for Uinta County Residents to help you make sure the water you are using is safe and healthy.

Test Option

FAMILY WATER QUALITY: Bacteria presence/absence, sulfate, total hardness, nitrate, nitrite, sodium, total dissolved solids, pH, fluoride, chloride. Test cost \$125.00. UCCD will pay 50% of this cost, making your total cost \$62.50.

COLIFORM BACTERIA PRESENCE/ABSENCE: Used as an indicator of water contamination. These organisms do not generally cause disease, but they indicate that the water is a suitable environment to support the presence of harmful bacteria. Test cost: \$30.00. UCCD will pay 100% of this cost, you will pay nothing if you choose to do just the bacteria test.

UCCD will be using an EPA Certified Lab in Riverton, Wyoming called Precision Analysis. The district will take care of all shipping procedures and costs. All you have to do is take the sample and bring it to us!!

*Precision Analysis promises a quick turnaround with results back in 6 days or less!

Dates to Remember

Must pre-register by Wednesday, June 8th, including which test option you would like — call 747-8223.

Pick up your sampling kit from the District on **Thursday June 16th from 8-2 or Monday-June 20th, 8-2pm.**

Sample your water on Tuesday-June 21st and bring the sample back to the Conservation District the same day, during the following times and locations:

BRIDGER VALLEY: sample collection
9am-11am at the Conservation District Office at the Lyman Town Hall: 100 East Sage Street, Lyman, WY

EVANSTON: sample collection
12-2pm at the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Office: 228 9th Street, Evanston, WY

Congratulations Conservation Assistance Grant Recipients

Event Recycle Bins for Uinta County-This project will help reinforce the importance of recycling in Uinta County and encourage more people to become recyclers. Michael and Amber Sawyer of Star Solutions Recycling, plan to purchase recycled plastic, see-through bins that will be placed in locations throughout the community, used at community events and made available for groups wishing to raise funds by collecting aluminum cans. Recycling bins are usually placed next to garbage cans to encourage people to recycle, however, they seem to be used more for trash than recyclables. By using clear, see-through bins, the public can see more clearly what is going into the recycling bin.

With this grant, Star Solutions Recycling will purchase nine recycle bins for use at events that sell beverages in cans or bottles and nine recycle bin paper lids for use in public places with higher paper volume. As residents of Uinta County, Star Solutions Recycling feels it is extremely important to provide recycling opportunities at public events and around the community. “For recycling to become a community value, it must be available in the community.”

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2011 Conservation Assistance Grant Recipients *Continued from previous page*

Williams Tree and Wildlife Restoration- This project is located south east of Lyman on County Road 253. Trevor and Dezi Williams own 9 acres of land that is completely void of trees and shrubs, limiting habitat and cover for wildlife. Also, due to the lack of vegetation, the snow blows and drifts on the county road. The goals of the project are to plant trees to provide wildlife habitat and windbreak protection as well as a living snow fence in the winter. There will be trees planted strategically around the property to best meet the goals of the planting. The project will include the installation of a watering system for drier areas and the digging of ditches to divert some of the runoff water from flooding the plantings. The plantings will be fenced off from grazing livestock where needed. They will work with the Conservation District to design a planting best suited for the site conditions.

“Litter” Known Facts & The Bag Monster- The Jim Bridger FFA Ag Issues Team has been very busy the last year promoting the use of re-useable grocery bags in the Bridger Valley. They have made a lot of progress and can see people paying attention to their message and bringing their cloth bags to the store when they go shopping. To promote their message, the Team first asks for a commitment from the shopper to use the cloth bag each time they go shopping, and then give them one free bag. They have given presentations about their project in the schools and at several public meetings and plan to give the same presentation at the State FFA Ag Issues Contest. The Team also shows up at Benedicts, the local grocery store, to promote the use of the bags even more. The Ag Issues Team hopes to expand their project throughout Uinta County by participating at the county fair this year. They will use this grant to continue their project by purchasing more cloth bags as well as some childrens cloth recycle back packs to use when they visit the schools.

Wyoming Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program *article submitted by Dave Kimble*



Irrigation-created hayland/wetlands on the Bear River

Forty-two percent of Wyoming’s land is privately owned, and managers of these lands play an integral role in sustaining native fish and wildlife. It is obvious to most Wyoming residents that agriculture is usually highly compatible with wildlife and often improves the habitat. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program embraces this principle and has been teaming with private landowners since 1988 to further enhance habitat in Wyoming with projects that often also benefit the agricultural production of the land.

The Partners Program provides assistance to plan and cost-share to fund habitat enhancements. Past examples from Wyoming include fence and water developments that improve livestock grazing management, irrigation diversion upgrades that allow for traditional water withdrawal and fish passage in streams, irrigation infrastructure rehabilitation for created wetlands, and restoration of natural wetlands. Depending on project type, project cost, and availability of other funding partners, cost-share rates are generally 50 to 90%. To receive project funding landowners



Upland & riparian grazing management project

Wyoming Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program *Continued from previous page*

agree to maintain the new structure (e.g. fence, dike, diversion, etc.) and use it for its intended purpose for at least 10 years. However, because projects are usually mutually beneficial for the landowner and wildlife, most landowners choose to maintain their projects beyond 10 years. Landowners retain all rights to control access to their private property.

Program participation is entirely voluntary and any private landowner is eligible to receive assistance. Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program staff can provide general technical assistance and assist with all aspects of project planning, design, permitting, and funding. Interested landowners in Uinta County may call Dave Kimble, PFW Biologist, at 307-789-3194 or stop by the USDA Forest Service office in Evanston.

Sage Grouse Initiative Program *article submitted by Bryan Christensen*

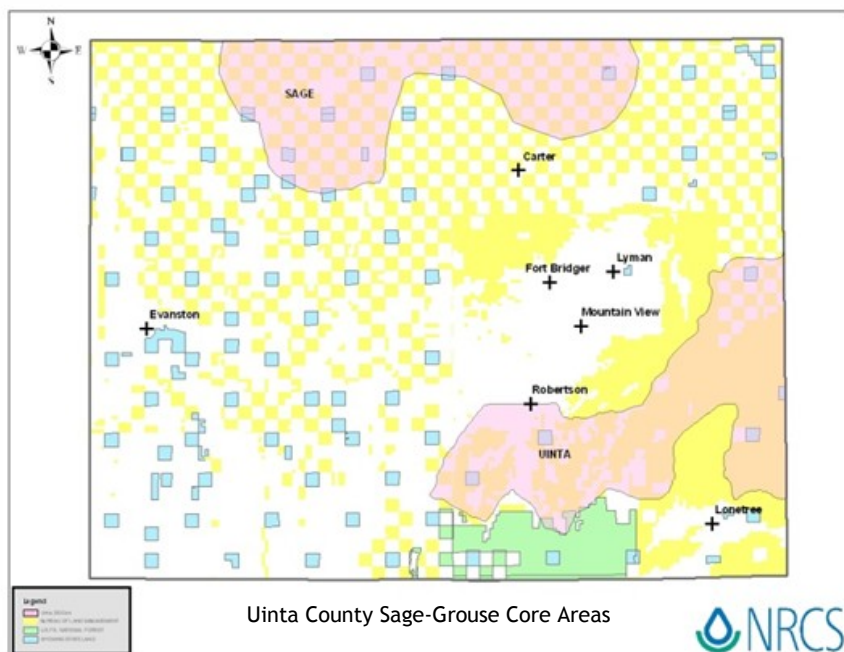
Last year the US Fish and Wildlife Service (The Service) announced their findings on the Greater Sage-Grouse (Sage-Grouse). Warranted but precluded was the official listing decision by The Service. Basically, this means that there is reason to list the Sage-Grouse on the Threatened and Endangered Species list, but there are other species requiring more immediate attention, thus making the Sage-Grouse a Candidate Species and still under management by the states. One of the reasons for the listing (there were a few) was the lack of “Regulatory Mechanisms”, meaning the states must institute a way to control certain activities with Sage-Grouse habitat. From this decision came the Core Area concept (which you or may not have seen). Within Core Areas, more stringent rules have been set up to regulate activities, mostly concerning industrial activities.

Shortly after The Service made their ruling, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced a new program to help private landowners in Sage-Grouse habitat, called the Sage-Grouse Initiative. The Sage-Grouse Initiative (SGI) is designed to help private landowners address concerns and threats to Sage-Grouse using technical and financial assistance. The program is funded through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) in the 11 western states that Sage-Grouse inhabit. Within the SGI program, there are opportunities to improve one’s current grazing system with the addition of structural practices, such as; stock water pipelines, water wells, stock tanks, etc... Also

available is an incentive package to alter one’s current grazing system to be more “Sage-Grouse friendly”, resting or deferring a percentage of their sage brush during the Sage-Grouse nesting season.

Currently the SGI program is available through your local NRCS office on a continual sign-up basis. A site visit, during the growing season, is encouraged to discuss the program, prior to sign-up.

If anyone is interested in pursuing this opportunity they can contact their local NRCS office, or Bryan Christensen, Rangeland Management Specialist in the Pinedale NRCS office at 307-367-2257 ext 106, or at bryan.christensen@wy.usda.gov.





Uinta County Conservation District

P.O. Box 370, 100 East Sage Street
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(307) 747-UCCD (8223)

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CHANGE OF SERVICE REQUESTED

ATTEND A BOARD MEETING

Board meetings are scheduled for the third
Thursday of each month.

8:00 p.m. March through October

7:00 p.m. November through February

Lyman Town Hall

Uinta County Conservation District

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dennis Cornelison — Chairman
Kelly Guild — Vice Chairman
Spencer Eyre — Secretary / Treasurer
Kevin Condos — Member
Shaun Sims — Member
Carol Hamilton — Associate Member

DISTRICT STAFF

Kerri Sabey — District Manager
(307) 747-8223
Email: ksabey@bvea.net

Dannette Edelmayer — Education Coordinator
(307) 747-8224
Email: dedelmayer@bvea.net

Oakley Ingersoll — Range Specialist
(307) 231-1717
Email: oingersoll@bvea.net

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Bridger Valley Health Fair—April 30, stop by and visit our booth!**
- **Seedling Trees will arrive the last week in April**
- **Ag Expo—Safety Day, May 5, welcome 3rd & 4th graders of Uinta County!**
- **BEARiverFest—May 21, stop by and see us!! To learn more, visit the new website at www.bearrivergreenway.org**
- **Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts Board Meeting, Evanston, June 7 & 8**
- **Well Water Testing Day—June 21, Open to Uinta County Residents See inside article for more details. Pre-register at 307-747-8223**
- **Range Workshop—June 29, Public Workshop—hands on field training See inside article for more details — please register at 307-747-8223**
- **Outdoor Education Workshop—July 26 & 27, Open to formal & non-formal educators, youth group leaders, home schoolers. UW credit or PTSB credit Pre-register at (307) 747-8224**

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff

Jeff Lewis; District Conservationist
Kevin Fackrell; Soil Conservation Technician
NRCS phone: (307) 787-3211

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