

High Country Conservation

Fall/Winter 2022

INTRODUCING

Chris Bovè



Chris Bovè was recently named Albany County District Conservationist for the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in the Laramie Field Office.

He began his career with NRCS in 2003 as a soil conservationist in Zillah, Washington and for the past 19 years, he has worked with ranchers, farmers, and foresters in Washington, Colorado, Wyoming, Arkansas, and North Carolina.

Chris loves managing natural resources and tracking the results of quality management over time.

"I am very excited for the opportunity to come back to Wyoming and work with our customers and our conservation partners to manage the extraordinary natural resources here," he said.

Water is what it's all about!

In the beginning, farmer and rancher diverted early spring runoff from the rivers to irrigate native grasses. Native grass hay was typically harvested in late summer and stored for winter livestock forage. What has roused from this practice, and that benefits Albany County residents today, is a combination of flood control, groundwater recharge, and wildlife habitat. The current practice of flood irrigation allows state and local governments the ability to divert and store early spring snowmelt into reservoirs, and eventually on hay meadows, lessening the potential of major flooding along the rivers and creeks.

During flood irrigation a hydrologic process occurs called groundwater recharge. This is where water moves downward through the soil, from surface water to groundwater.

For most of Albany County's residents, groundwater recharge is very important for maintaining late season water flows into rivers and creeks. Late season water flow helps protect fisheries and their habitats. Additional wildlife benefit from flood irrigation with the creation of seasonal wet meadow habitats. These seasonal wet meadow habitats are all along our riparian corridors and provide excellent stopover points for migratory birds as well as safe havens for mule deer, whitetail deer, moose, and elk.

This also creates numerous recreational opportunities like wildlife viewing, bird watching, as well as hunting and fishing, for Albany County residents and visitors.

We are proud to say that Albany County livestock producers have been employing flood irrigation techniques since the late 1800's.

However, many irrigation infrastructures that are still in use today have well exceeded their life expectancy. Laramie Rivers Conservation District is working with multiple partners to review and assess Albany County's aging irrigation infrastructures. It is important to maintain these irrigation infrastructures in good operating condition as they provide numerous benefits not only to the livestock producers, but to the public as well.

If you are interest in learning more about our programs and those of are partners, please contact us. Give us a call. We look forward to hearing from you!

- Martin



Local Group Studying Critical Aging Irrigation Infrastructure

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING DATES

6-8 PM

Riverton - November 8

Central Wyoming College
Intertribal Center Room #116
2860 W. Main St.
Riverton, WY 82501

Powell - November 9

Northwest College
Yellowstone Conference
Center, Room YB 106
231 West 6th St.
Powell, WY 82435

Worland - November 10

Worland Community Center
Washakie Room
1200 Culbertson Ave
Worland, WY 82401

Torrington - November 17

Platte Valley Bank
The Community Room
2201 Main St
Torrington, WY 82240



Find current and up-to-date
Snow Pack and Water data here:

<http://www.wrds.uwyo.edu/>

The Water Resources Data System (WRDS) is a clearinghouse of hydrological and climatological data for the State of Wyoming.

As an effort to help avoid another irrigation failure like the Gering – the Fort Laramie Canal tunnel collapse that happened in 2019, the Wyoming State Legislature allocated funds to the Wyoming Water Development Office (WWDO) to conduct a study of Wyoming’s irrigation infrastructure needs.



WWDO selected Trihydro Corporation, based in Laramie, to complete a statewide study assessing Critical Aging Irrigation Infrastructure. So far, Trihydro has conducted 6 of 10 meetings with locals across the state to identify critical aging irrigation infrastructure and necessary maintenance required to proactively avoid another catastrophe.



Critical Aging Irrigation Infrastructure Assessment

Trihydro hosted their first meeting in Laramie on September 20th where 40 people attended. Jill Pehl, a Project Engineer at Trihydro, said the greatest takeaway from the Laramie discussion was around the definition of “critical”. Many attendees made the comment that critical issues aren’t always at big structures, rather they can be related to smaller issues such as canal erosion and seepage that have been intensifying over time. Therefore, some irrigation infrastructure should be considered “critical” despite its physical size. Given this variability, Pehl commented they’ll need everyone’s help across the state to be proactive in prioritizing irrigation infrastructure projects.

The study is expected to complete in December 2024 but ongoing input and participation is encouraged. Please contact Jay Schug (jschug@trihydro.com; 970-449-2921) or Jill Pehl (jpehl@trihydro.com; 307-399-4600). A list of upcoming meeting dates and additional information is located online at: https://wwdc.state.wy.us/critical_infrastructure/CAII.html.

Wyoming Water Development Office

6920 Yellowtail Rd
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: 307-777-7626



Fall came fast to Southeast Wyoming...

Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation (WNRF) Raffle Tickets for the annual WNRF gator raffle are now available!

This is the primary fundraiser for the foundation and all donations go towards funding conservation projects in Wyoming. Tickets are \$25.

The drawing will be held December 7th and you do NOT need to be present to win.

LRCO has a limited number of tickets available upon request! Please contact us as soon as possible to snag your ticket(s) today!



Deadline for submission: 2/24/2023

Community Enhancement Grant funding available!

Financial assistance for natural resource conservation projects that benefit our communities.

COMPLETE THE PRODUCER SURVEY!



SCAN QR CODE TO COMPLETE ONLINE

Visit www.groundupconsulting.us/wchs to learn more



WYOMING COLLABORATIVE FOR HEALTHY SOILS

1st Prize
2023 John Deere Gator XUV560E

Only 800 tickets sold!



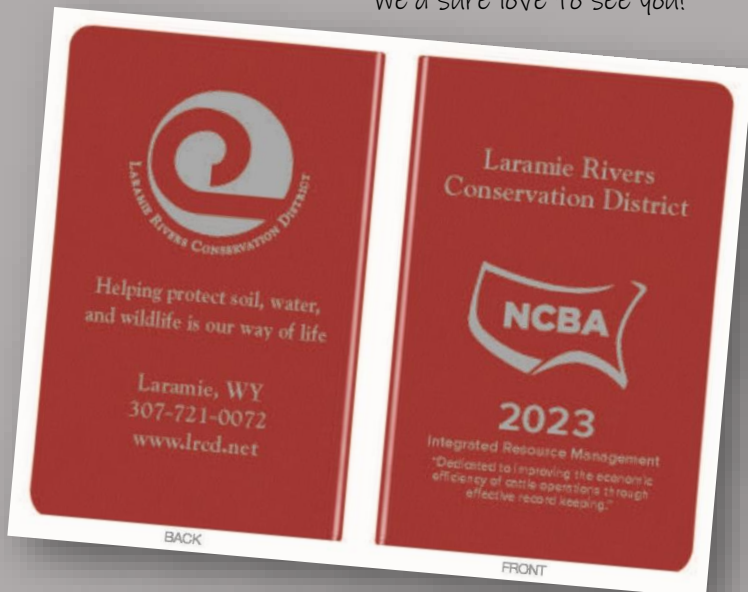
2nd Prize
Stihl Chainsaw



Actual prices may not be exactly as pictured

LRCO has Red Books available!!

Stop by the office and pick up yours today!
We'd sure love to see you!



2022 LRCO Board of Supervisors

Left to Right:
Carol Price, Secretary/Treasurer;
Bob Shine, Vice Chair;
(back) Larry Munn, Supervisor;
(front) Ruth Shepherd, Board Chair;
Zach Iddings, Supervisor

~ Upcoming Events ~

- November 1st Veteran's Day - Office Closed
- November 22nd Monthly LRCD Board Meeting
12-3pm at the LRCD Office:
5015 Stone Road, Laramie, WY
- November 24th & 25th Thanksgiving Holiday - Office Closed
- December 5th - 8th State Convention - Casper, WY
- December 21st Monthly LRCD Board Meeting
12-3pm at the LRCD Office:
5015 Stone Road, Laramie, WY
- December 23rd & 26th Christmas Holiday - Office Closed
- December 30th & January 2nd New Years Holiday - Office Closed

We want to hear from you!!



Contact LRCD STAFF
Mon-Fri 8am - 4:30pm

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www.lrccd.net

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

LRCD's Mission: To provide leadership for the conservation of Albany County's soil and water and to promote the sustained use of Wyoming's water and all other natural resources. To preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, protect the tax base and to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Albany County through a responsible conservation ethic.