



HIGH COUNTRY CONSERVATION

JANUARY 2024

Happy
New
Year!



~ Larry, Zach, Martin, Ruth, Tosha, Holly, Carol, and Mandy (not pictured)



WILDLIFE FOCUSED PROJECTS, PAST AND FUTURE

LRCO is continuously working to improve and protect wildlife habitats. Whether converting fences to wildlife friendly standards, protecting migratory routes and winter range habitats, or reducing sediment loading in our streams through streambank stabilization, LRCO is always excited to build relationships and partnerships that help our wildlife communities. I would like to highlight a couple of past projects as well as a couple new projects that are in the works.

LRCO had the opportunity to work with The Conservation Fund and the USFWS to set up a safe harbor agreement that covers approximately 3,564 acres of wetland habitat suitable for Wyoming Toads. A safe harbor agreement is a voluntary agreement involving private or other non-Federal property owners whose actions contribute to the recovery of threatened or endangered species. This summer, under this safe harbor agreement, Wyoming Toads were released back into habitat where the toads were first documented in the 1970s.

We wrapped up the Jelm Phase 1 River Restoration Project. River stabilization and erosion concerns increased dramatically after a large river meander cut off within the Laramie River upstream of Woods Landing. Excessive sediment loads caused by the Badger Creek wildfire scar further exacerbated water quality and negatively affected trout habitat. LRCO partnered with several individuals and organizations to enhance river stability, a newly formed oxbow wetland, and trout habitat throughout a 3,000-foot reach of the river.

Currently, LRCO is in the planning phase for a Jelm Phase 2 project. This will be a continuation of Phase 1 extending the current river restoration work an additional 1,500 feet downstream. Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 are part of a Wyoming Game and Fish Department public fishing easement.

LRCO has been assisting stakeholders with the rehabilitation of the Dowlin Diversion. This diversion is an essential part of the City of Laramie's long-term water supply. The Dowlin Diversion began operation in the early 1900's to divert water from the Laramie River to the Dowlin ditch and lateral ditches that deliver water to approximately 2,500 acres of irrigated meadows. The planned work will update the Dowlin Diversion to the 21st century. This will include new headgates, new measuring devices, and improve standard human and boater safety in association with the diversion. A key component of the innovative design and function of the diversion will include fish passage to allow habitat connectivity for aquatic species. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2025.

Martin

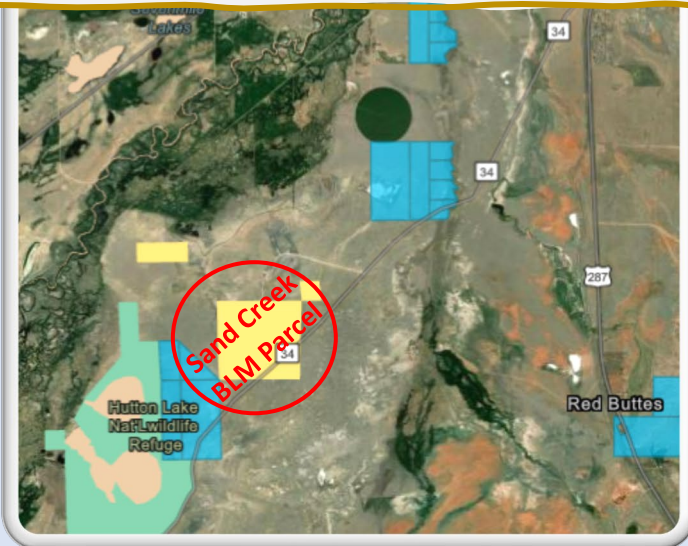


NEW YEAR, SAME LAND, NEW YOU?

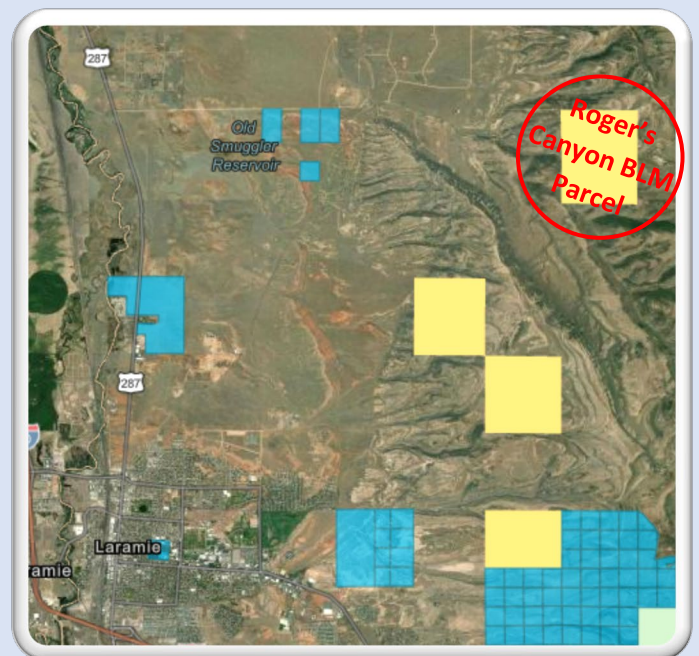
Living in WY, we have more access to publicly accessible federal and state trust lands than residents who live in non-western states. But loving and recreating on our publicly accessible lands comes with challenges, even here in Laramie. We thought we'd take a moment to talk about two parcels that our community loves to use, but that are in some dire need of TLC. We'll talk about what efforts are underway to better manage these parcels and what you can do to help ensure we are all enjoying our open spaces responsibly.

There are two parcels of land that frequent public attention and are in poor shape. Both parcels are owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management ("BLM") and can be easily accessed by public county roads. One parcel is located northeast of Laramie about 11 miles down Roger Canyon Road. The other is about 10 miles southwest of Laramie off of Sand Creek Road. Both parcels are heavily used for recreational shooting, social get-togethers, and off-roading adventures.

BLM has its "multiple use mandate" (included in the Federal Lands Management and Policy Act), allowing for all sorts of activities, but these two parcels have become notorious for being used irresponsibly and problems are compounding, given their popularity. The heavy off-roading has resulted in unmanageable erosion, increasing the susceptibility for invasive plants to move in and overall decreasing the wildlife habitat and scenery for others to enjoy. In addition, the heavy target practice activity and social gatherings that take place on these parcels has cultivated a littering problem that has become a normal state for the lands.



While we all like to enjoy our public lands in different ways, LRCD wants to remind our community going into the new year, that we are all individually responsible to care for these lands as we recreate on them. The less destruction we cause to our public lands, the better for everyone and everything, and the longer these lands will continue to provide wonderful outdoor experiences everyone can enjoy. We can each do our part and we can hold one another accountable by helping police these lands. As Andy Williams, the BLM Recreation Coordinator for this parcel and region put it, *"Public officials shouldn't be the only ones protecting public lands. The public should help police their public lands too."*



BLM Recreation Coordinator:

Andy Williams, 307-328-4310

BLM Ranger:

Brent Mahle, 307-259-5706

DID YOU KNOW?



Some of the most problematic activities that take place on both of these parcels is illegal dumping and illegal road creation – both of which can affect wildlife habitat and water quality for our community.

If you happen to see either of these activities taking place, Andy recommended calling the BLM ranger or county sheriff and snapping a photo with a license plate, if possible. Unfortunately, BLM is understaffed and it's a struggle to police the 3.2 million surface acres within the Recreation Management Area.

That's why BLM emphasizes the importance of doing our part and holding ourselves and each other accountable while recreating.

**\$250.00
REWARD**

For information leading to the conviction of any person damaging your public lands through off road vehicle violations, vandalism or any other criminal activity in the state of Wyoming.

**Contact:
888-358-2310**

Location:

GPS Coordinates

Check out this Cowboy Character factsheet for tips on how you can do your part to recreate responsibly!



Show Your Cowboy Character

Recreate Responsibly



Out here in Wyoming, Cowboy Character is at the heart of who we are. We ask that while you visit, you follow the Cowboy Code of Ethics by practicing Leave No Trace and recreate responsibly, so that everyone can share our outdoor spaces.

Live Each Day with Courage

Have the **courage** and integrity to recreate responsibly all the time, not just when someone is watching.

Always Finish What You Start

Never leave a campfire unattended and always extinguish it completely. Fires should be cold to the touch. Always use established fire rings and check ahead for fire restrictions.

Take Pride in Your Work

Take pride in leaving the area **better** than you found it. Pick up after yourself or others, stay on the trails, obey all posted signs, and park in designated areas only.

Do What Has to be Done

Pay the day use fees, as they fund toilet facilities. Using provided toilets and cleaning up after pets protects **water** sources from contamination. When facilities are not available, plan to pack out all waste or dig a cathole away from water.

Be Tough, but Fair

Yield to others on all **multi-use** trails. Mountain bikers yield to hikers, hikers and mountain bikers yield to equestrians. Always leash pets in crowded areas and near wildlife.

Ride for the Brand

When riding, always stay on **designated trails** and roads to protect vegetation. Treat the land with respect by seeking dry areas, as riding through mud and water damages trails and streams.

Talk Less & Say More

Respectfully engage with others when there is conflict. Have the **courage** to educate others on responsible recreation, or alert the authorities.

Remember that Some Things Aren't for Sale (Or to Pet)

Take only pictures, keep only memories, and give someone else the **joy of discovery** by leaving nature as it is found. Keep animals wild by giving them plenty of space, and never feed a wild animal.

Know Where to Draw the Line

Preserve search and rescue resources by **knowing** your limits, equipment, and the area, and being wise about how you engage in your activity.

When You Make a Promise, Keep It

Pledge to take care of Albany County's public lands when recreating. A **Cowboy** always keeps their word.

Let's Work
Together:



Heidi School of Environment
and Natural Resources
Outdoor Recreation and
Tourism Management

To learn more go to

VISITLARAMIE.ORG • #RecreateResponsibly

If you're interested in getting involved with local community cleanup efforts, please reach out to these local entities:

Common Outdoor Ground
commonoutdoorground@gmail.com



Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Coordinator - SE Region:
[Brynn Hirschman, 307-701-5011](mailto:Brynn.Hirschman@blm.gov)

HAS ANYONE NOTICED SOME NEAT NEW IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ALBANY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY'S OUTDOOR STORY WALK?

The local community library was the first recipient of LRCD's new Community Enhancement Grant program which kicked off last spring. This program was created by the LRCD's Board to provide funding for projects that have a direct community benefit through promoting Albany County's natural resources and beautification of public spaces.

The Library is still working on their project and it's likely going to be wrapped up in Summer 2024. However, LRCD is always accepting applications for new projects! Grants can be awarded up to \$5,000 per project, requiring applicants to provide 30% of estimated expenses in-kind. Some ideas for potential projects that would qualify include helping fund organized community cleanup days, installing interpretive signs in outdoor areas or along trails, or creating gardens with native plants in public areas to help with water conservation and stormwater runoff.

If you've got another idea, we want to hear it!



For more information,
or to download an application,
please visit our website or contact our office!



Workers dig areas for new cement pads along the story walk trail.



Check out our Facebook page for the latest district information and updates!

PREFER AN ELECTRONIC VERSION?
EMAIL INFO@LRCD.NET
TO BE ADDED TO OUR EMAIL DISTRIBUTION LIST!

SAVE → THE → DATE

LRCD's 2024 Tree and Shrub sale is tentatively scheduled for mid-February and will be hosted online again this year!

Trees will be ready for pickup at the end of April, 2024.

Make sure you are subscribed to receive our notifications regarding the Tree Sale by signing up here:

<https://www.lrcd.net/lrcd-tree-shrub-program>

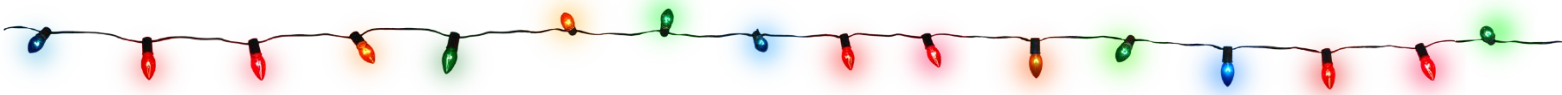


High Country Conservation *January 2024*



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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.