

High Country Conservation

Spring/Summer 2022

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INTRODUCING

Holly Dyer



Holly is the newest member of the Conservation District and will serve as the Rangeland and Watershed Resource Specialist. Originally from Logan, Utah, Holly has lived in Laramie for the past 7 years and has a background in agricultural economics, soil health, and land management. In her spare time, she loves to take the horses out with her husband, Ben, or explore a new trail by foot, bike, or skis!

Water is what it's all about!

As residents of Albany County, it is important to remember that we are the first users of the waters that flow from the Big and Little Laramie Rivers. The Laramie watershed begins in our very own backyard!

In the next few editions, I will be writing a short series of articles that will discuss best management practices that can be employed to protect the water quality of the Laramie Rivers, allowing us to do our part in preserving the quality of our water for the multiple users of this precious resource.

In this first article I want to talk about grazing strategies along the riparian corridors. Riparian vegetation typically is quite different from that of plants on adjacent uplands and are usually more palatable to livestock. Therefore, these riparian areas are often over used and exposed to streambank damage when livestock grazing is uncontrolled.

To better manage livestock use of these riparian zones it is recommended to use fencing to limit access and control the timing of use along streams. Limiting grazing intensity and controlling season of use will encourage healthier plant growth and vigor, which in turn, can assist in dissipating streamflow energy during high flow events, trap

In conjunction with fencing, development of off-stream livestock watering stations that utilize solar pumping platforms can provide a very reliable source of water. It has also been demonstrated, here in Albany County, to be a dependable source of water during the winter months as well.

If you are interested in protecting your streambanks, please contact Laramie Rivers Conservation District or the local NRCS office to discuss your ideas and/or concerns.

There are numerous funding opportunities to assist with implementing best management practices to address riparian corridors.

Give us a call. We look forward to hearing from you!

- Martin



What is a BMP?

The term 'Best Management Practices', or BMPs, was coined nearly 35 years ago as a way to describe acceptable practices that could be implemented to protect water quality and promote soil conservation during forestry activities.

Creating an alternate water source for livestock, away from rivers & streams, is a BMP that has been shown to reduce ecoli levels and increase overall stream health.



Scan the QR code to visit Wyoming's Forestry BMPs: Water Quality Protection Guidelines



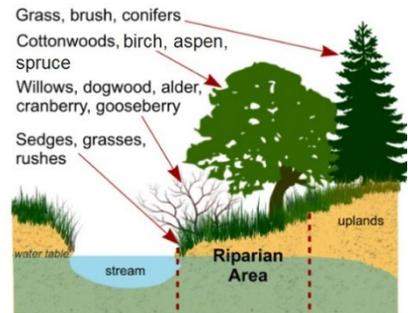
Why Best Land Management?

Common practices

- > Removal or burning of pasture/crop residues
- > Continuous ploughing and harrowing
- > Misuse /waste of water
- > Overgrazing
- > Deforestation
- > Mono-cropping
- > Excessive use of fertilisers
- > Misuse of pesticides

Consequences

- > Poor soil cover, high runoff
- > Erosion and sedimentation
- > Increase risk of drought and flood
- > Loss of soil fertility/productivity
- > Salinity
- > Falling water table/ drying streams
- > Food and health insecurity
- > Water contamination: ground & surface
- > Greenhouse gas release
- > Increased pest and disease incidence
- > Loss of biodiversity and ecological functions



Without trees water temperature increases and fewer aquatic species can be found in the water

Short or no grass allows pollutants to flow directly into streams



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.

Without a healthy riparian area, the wildlife corridor disappears, and more pollutants enter streams



Wise care of feeding animal areas, septic systems, landscaping helps maintain clean water

Wyoming is a great place to live. Open space and the rural nature of the state are some of the main reasons people choose to live in Wyoming. Living in a place where many of our backyards also contain our barnyards is a wonderful opportunity, but, as we know, it also presents unique challenges in caring for the soil, air, and water. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Congress developed environmental legislation that affects us all today. Most are familiar with the Endangered Species Act. Its cousin, the Clean Water Act, tends to be less well-known and understood. It ensures our water stays clean and that the activities we use it for remain viable.

Barnyards and backyards are relevant to the discussion. Water from rain or snowmelt travels either over the ground or through the soil into streams, bringing with it anything it can move, such as sediment, minerals, and contaminants. Although some amount of particle movement is inevitable, practices can be implemented to ensure your piece of ground is protected and that we are part of water quality protection and not part of a problem.

BARNYARDS
& BACKYARDS
Live!!!

ALL SESSIONS BEGIN AT
10AM

Check out the schedule
online:

[http://www.uwyo.edu/
barnbackyard/live/](http://www.uwyo.edu/barnbackyard/live/)

Landscaping

Landscaping has a big effect on water quality. Maintaining good ground cover is essential to minimizing the overland flow of water and the amount of pollution water can pickup on its way to a stream. Maintaining some type of surface cover is desirable in most situations. Even in situations where having surface cover is not possible, such as driveways and heavy-use areas, it is important to try and maintain a vegetative buffer strip or area where water can filter into the ground or through vegetation before it gets back to streams. That isn't a green light to go overboard with inputs in landscaping. In fact, it is equally important to closely monitor the amounts and timing of fertilizers and pesticides that are applied. Acre-for-acre, more pollution comes from poorly managed lawns than from farms. Be sure to follow directions on the inputs applied to landscapes whether a lawn, a pasture, or a big garden.

Animal Feeding Areas

Animal feeding areas Government agencies like to call them AFOs, or animal feeding operations. An AFO is any area where animals are confined for a significant amount of time (40 days or more annually) that has no permanent vegetation. In most cases, these are corrals, but, in some cases, it may be small-acreage pastures where vegetation has been overgrazed. The animals can be horses, llamas, goats, cows, dogs – it really doesn't matter. Rain and snowmelt can pickup sediment and contaminants on bare ground and transport them to surface waters. What is the solution? Ensure these areas have good vegetation cover at all times. Alternatives are the use of good vegetative buffer strips, good manure management, and making sure water that leaves the area doesn't go directly into streams or ditches that may then drain into streams, rivers, or other water bodies. With good planning, protecting water quality in our own little piece of the world ultimately makes our piece of the world that much better.

Septic Systems

Septic system maintenance We take it for granted when we flush it goes away. Remember, septic systems are designed to clean water. The water almost always ends up back in a stream or the ground water. A properly functioning septic system (one that has a good tank, is pumped regularly, and has a properly functioning, non-saturated leach field) will cleanup effluent before it gets back into the water. Pollutants end up in streams and ground water if a leach field is not functioning correctly. Have your system checked by a professional if in doubt

By Nephi Cole, 2011

~ Upcoming Events ~



2022 LRC 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

- June 18th, 2022 Pelton Creek Plant Walk
6-8pm. Held in conjunctions with:
  
- June 22nd, 2022 Monthly LRC Board Meeting
12-3pm at the LRC Office: 5015 Stone Road, Laramie, WY
- June 24th-26th, 2022 Gem City Showdown Educational Booth
3-6pm at the Albany County Fairgrounds, Laramie, WY
- June 27th-30th, 2022 Wyoming Watershed Conference
LRC Staff will be attending the 2022 state watershed conference in Riverton, WY
- July 20th, 2022 Monthly LRC Board Meeting
12-3pm at the LRC Office: 5015 Stone Road, Laramie, WY

High Country Conservation Spring/Summer 2022



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LRC'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.