

High Country Conservation

Summer 2023

Got weeds? We do too...

Laramie Rivers Conservation District (LRCD) and Albany County Weed and Pest (ACWP) have teamed up to work together to address a large noxious weed infestation within Rock River, WY, and the surrounding areas.

The weeds of concern consist of Hoary Cress (*Lepidium draba*) and Russian Knapweed (*Rhaponticum repens*). For several years, ACWP has strived to educate and encourage individual landowners to treat their properties for weeds each year. Some landowners have adamantly attempted to manage the weeds on their property, but without aggressive and consistent efforts as a whole community, progress with decreasing the weed population has not been measurable. This is concerning.

The impacts of eliminating these infestations can have both ecological and economical effects. The local community, and surrounding counties, heavily rely on the rich agricultural products that are produced in the Rock River valley. If left unchecked, these weed infestations will eventually displace native plant and animal communities. The dense monoculture stands that Hoary Cress and Russian Knapweed are capable of producing, can dramatically reduce biodiversity and forage production, resulting in less carrying capacity for wildlife and livestock.

In the fall of 2013, LRCD was awarded a Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resource Trust (WWNRT) grant that allowed the district to employ a contracted weed sprayer. This individual treated the larger areas of infestation and concern.

LRCD was awarded a second WWNRT grant in 2016 to continue our efforts of addressing these infestations further downstream on Rock Creek.

Over the last 9 years, LRCD and ACWP have been able to successfully use the the financial assistance from the WWNRT grants to hire contractors for yearly chemical applications. We have treated over 11,500 acres of Hoary Cress and Russian Knapweed combined at a total cost of \$66,200.00 to date.

LRCD and ACWP will continue to host volunteer weed spray days every spring and fall within the Rock River community. If you have questions about weed concerns in your area, please feel free to give me a call. You aren't the only one!

- Martin



NAME: Whitetop. Peppergrass. Hoary Cress. *Lepidium draba*

IMPACT: Level-B noxious weed. Aggressive and crowds out native species. Reduces crop yields.

Unpalatable to wildlife and livestock.

TREATMENT: No single treatment provides effective, long term control. Integrate a variety of combinations of competitive planting, crop rotations, and herbicides.



You can practice water conservation too!



LRCDC wanted to touch on some water facts given the warm summer season. Did you know most land in Albany County only receives between 10-14” of water each year – predominantly from Spring precipitation between February and June? The lack of water combined with the common sandy soils across Albany County make it even more difficult to keep vegetation green for very long regardless of whether it’s in the rangeland or out in your yard.

While we often hear about the water shortages in the Colorado River impacting the Southwestern US, there are many communities and ecosystems that rely on local stewardship and conservation of our own local water resources. We all have a role in helping to prevent wasting or overusing our natural resources and water conservation can be easily practiced by everyone. Here are some tips we recommend you start considering for your own yard!

- **Water only when needed. Look at the grass, feel the soil, or use a soil moisture meter to determine when to water.**
- **Do not over-water. Soil can hold only so much moisture, and the rest simply runs off. A timer will help, and either a kitchen timer or an alarm clock will do. Apply only enough water to fill the plant’s root zone. Excess water beyond that is wasted. One and a half inches of water applied once a week in the summer will keep most grasses alive and healthy.**
- **Use drip irrigation systems for bedded plants, trees, or shrubs, or turn soaker hoses upside-down so the holes are on the bottom. This will help avoid evaporation.**
- **Water slowly for better absorption, and never water on a windy day.**
- **Condition the soil with mulch or compost before planting grass or flowerbeds so that water will soak in rather than run off.**
- **Do not scalp lawns when mowing during hot weather. Taller grass holds moisture better. Grass should be cut fairly often, so that only 1/2 to 3/4 inch is trimmed off. A better looking lawn will result.**
- **Consider decorating some areas of the lawn with wood chips, rocks, gravel, or other materials now available that require no water at all.**
- **Choose drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, and grasses. Some “water smart” species include Rocky Mountain Juniper, Ponderosa Pine, Bristlecone Pine, Chokecherry, Caragana shrub, and use low-maintenance grass mixes like rye and fescue. Water guzzlers are cottonwoods, blue spruce, aspen, currants, and willows.**

ANALYSIS

COST SHARE PROGRAM

This program provides incentive for Albany County residents to better understand their natural resources by cost sharing on expenses for analysis testing at recognized analytical labs.

The maximum matching amount for this cost-share is \$500.

Examples of eligible projects:

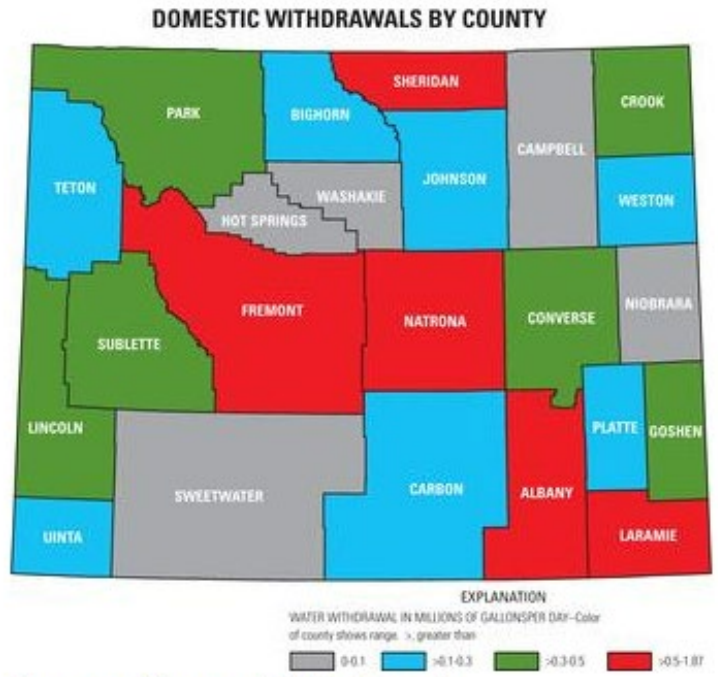
- Soil testing for gardens or crops
- Potable water tests
- Trace minerals in water
- Irrigation/livestock water testing
- Forage testing

For complete guidelines, visit www.LRCDC.net



DID YOU KNOW?

The Wyoming Water Development Office estimates 80 gallons of water is used each day per person for outdoor domestic use – adding up to about 30,000 gallons of water each year! In fact, the US Geological Survey Survey (USGS) found that in 2015 Albany County was one of the top 5 counties in the state as far as domestic water withdrawals. The image below shows Albany Counties estimated domestic water withdrawals to be between 0.5 and 1 million gallons of water per day. Something to keep in mind as we all go into this summer season.



Sources/Usage: Public Domain.
Map of the 2015 county water use withdrawals for domestic in Wyoming.

The following publications are available for FREE at our office!

Swing by and grab your copies M-F, between 8-4:30pm!
Don't forget to say "hi" to our Watershed & Resource Specialist, Holly Dyer!





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

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

~ Upcoming Events ~

- July 11th Dowlin Diversion Public Meeting Open House & Project Presentation 5:30pm @ the Laramie Rec Center
- July 12th Local Work Group Meeting with NRCS 10am-12pm @ LRCD Board Room
- July 15th Snowy Range Community Plant Walk @ 9am Register here: <https://bbsnowyrangewalk23.eventbrite.com>
- July 18th LRCD Monthly Board Meeting & Annual Budget Hearing 12-3pm @ LRCD Board Room
- Aug 22nd Easement Workshop with NRCS 6-8pm @ The Hansen Arena
- Aug 23rd LRCD Monthly Board Meeting 12-3pm @ LRCD Board Room

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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.