



MEET MANDI

The Popo Agie Conservation District in partnership with the Intermountain West Joint Venture, NRCS, and others, hired Mandi Hirsch as the new Rangeland Management Specialist to help carry out the Sage Grouse Initiative in Fremont County. Mandi is one of 5 positions in Wyoming and 1 of 23 total positions in the 11 western states to provide financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers for the Sage Grouse Initiative. This assistance will be focused on developing and implementing conservation practices in areas containing the

highest numbers of sage-grouse to help alleviate threats to the birds themselves and their habitat while maintaining working ranchlands and sustainable agriculture. The programs offered through the initiative will help in continuing rural lifestyles along with world-class wildlife populations and habitats of the west by focusing on keeping large tracts of land intact.

Mandi grew up on a commercial cow/calf operation near Rangely, Colorado where she received hands-on experience working with livestock, natural resources, government agencies, and the ups and downs of the ranching life style. With this experience, Mandi has always had a devoted love and interest for agriculture and rangelands and knew she wanted to work with both in her future. She received an Associates of Agricultural Business from Northeastern Junior College and then continued her education at Colorado State University where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Rangeland Ecology and Management and is finishing up her Masters degree in Rangeland Ecosystem Science. Mandi is very excited and eager to start working with the agricultural producers across Fremont County this spring and hopes that her personal experiences and schooling will help in assisting producers and their lands. Mandi says, "Lander and the surrounding areas remind me a lot of where I grew up and I can't wait to get involved with the local community." Please feel free to contact Mandi with any questions concerning the Sage Grouse Initiative, enrollment processes, programs offered through the initiative, planning tools, or to just introduce yourself.



Email: mandi.hirsch@wy.usda.gov Phone: (307) 332-3114 ext. 13



FREE RURAL WELL-WATER TESTING PROGRAM

As a service to the community, Popo Agie Conservation District (PACD) is sponsoring a Free Well Water Testing Day. Participants may collect and drop off samples May 9, 2012. The purpose of the test is to identify the presence or absence of *E.coli* bacteria.

Folks interested in participating must pick up a sampling kit at the PACD office prior to the testing days. Samples should be collected from a drinking water tap the morning of the test day and brought directly to the our office where they will be refrigerated prior to transport to a local laboratory for analysis. All samples must be received at the PACD office prior to 12:00 noon on the testing day to be processed. Results of the analysis will be mailed directly to the landowner. PACD will not keep a copy of the analysis in their office. This free service is only for rural water wells used for human consumption. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the PACD office at 332-3114.

Fremont County Farm and Ranch Days

The annual Farm and Ranch Days are held in Riverton at the Armory located next to the Fair Grounds.

Wednesday and Thursday, February 1 and 2, 2012.



January 2012 newsletter

Supporting the conservation and wise use of our natural resources

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CALENDAR

February

- 1-2 Farm and Ranch Days
- 20 PACD office closed, Presidents Day

April

- 13-14 Gardening & Backyard Living Expo
- 14 Deadline to order seedling trees.
- 25 Pick up seedling trees

May

- 9 Free Rural Well Water Test Day

The PACD Board of Supervisors meeting is the first Wednesday of every month at 4:00pm and is open to the public.

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Seedling Tree Time



THE BIG NEWS THIS YEAR is the ability to order a large variety of bare root trees in lots of 25 rather than 50. Also new this year, we are offering a smaller box of landscape fabric staples. You can still get a box of 1000 staples of 11 gauge wire, but you can also get a smaller box of 500 staples of 8 gauge wire.

Last year, the 1 gallon pots were popular, so they are available this year once again but with a few more varieties to choose from.

It doesn't seem nearly as hard this year to think about seedling trees in January as it did last year. We've had a mild winter so far. But even if the temperatures drop and some harsh winter days show up during these next few weeks, don't forget that now is the time to plan and place an order for this year's planting. The 2012 order form is included with this newsletter and can also be found on our website (popoagie.org) or you can stop by our office to pick one up.

Order deadline: April 14, 2012

Tree pickup: April 25, 2012

MORE SPECIES IN LOTS OF 25



POPO AGIE CONSERVATION DISTRICT HOSTED STATE CONVENTION



Lander hosted the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) state convention this November 14-17, 2011. The event combined the annual conventions of WACD with the Wyoming Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM); over 300 people attended.

Popo Agie Conservation District won the award for "Outstanding Plan of Work". Lander teacher, Leann Sebade, won "Outstanding Teacher of the Year", and Lander student, Jalyne Brough won first place on the state level for her poster she submitted during last year's "Soil and Water Stewardship Week". Her poster will now be entered in the national contest.



Leann Sebade awarded Teacher of the Year.



Diana Olson accepting award for PACD's Outstanding Plan of Work



Jalyne Brough awarded first place in poster contest.

GARDENING AND BACKYARD LIVING EXPO April 13th and 14th

PACD and the Fremont County Extension offices have partnered to plan an event that promises to be an exciting kick-off to spring 2012! The Expo will feature two main venues: vendor booths and educational breakout sessions. Vendor booths will display the latest and greatest offerings of information and items that will help folks enjoy their gardens and backyards. We will also host eight *Barnyard and Backyard* workshops throughout the event to promote conservation while creating some excitement in your backyard with poultry, pollinators, or those amazing hummingbirds. The breakouts will begin each hour and run for approximately 45 minutes.

This will be a family friendly event and we've dedicated a "Kids Corner" where our younger participants can participate through some hands-on activities. To add dimension and further encourage the community to participate in this exciting event we've invited Rocky Mountain Rebels to display their classic cars, hot rods, and stunning new cars like the Dodge Viper! We plan to partner with a local food vendor and there will be a drawing for a ball and burlap tree for those who attend.



Lander Community Center
Friday, April 13th from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Saturday, April 14th from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon

EDUCATION

We have been busy teaching kids about conservation concepts this fall. The kids especially enjoyed lessons outside of the classroom; we taught at City Park, CWC Sinks Canyon Center, and at the Lander Old Timer's Arena. We also helped judge various science fairs. We presented various lessons to approximately 670 students total during the first semester of the school year.

- 2nd Grade Mapping Lesson
Water Conservation and Pollution Lesson
- 3rd Grade Aquatic Insects Lesson
Sally Soil in the Soils Kitchen at the Ag Expo
- 4th Grade Outdoor Education Day
- 5th Grade World Water Monitoring
- 6th Grade Watershed and Riparian Lesson

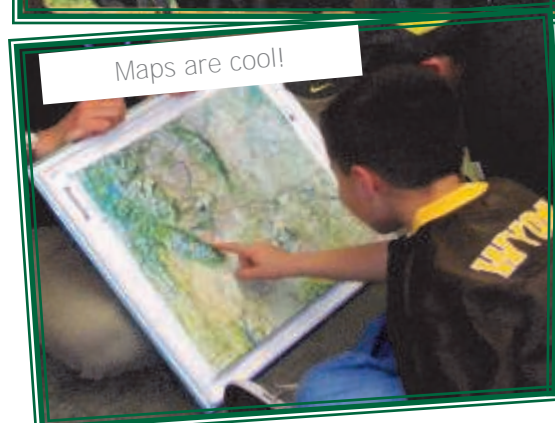


UPCOMING EDUCATION

- January—Mapping Skills Lesson for second graders.
- February—Geology/Soils Lesson to various grades.
- March—We generally teach watershed lessons using the Enviroscope Model. Teachers, please call in to schedule a time if you would like us to come to your classroom.



April—Soil and Water Stewardship Week poster contest for 5th grade and high school students. This year's theme is *Soil to Spoon*. First place winners are awarded cash prizes.



We presented a watershed lesson at the Lander Children's Museum during their Water Works event. These participants were amazed and horrified to see the sludge from the factory contaminate the lake.

Check out our website at popoagie.org