



the wyoming game & fish department



LANDER REGION newsletter december 2015

From the Field

Pheasants



Successful youth hunters

Regional wildlife personnel were busy stocking pheasants and checking hunters at Ocean Lake and Sand Mesa Wildlife Habitat Management Areas and they ran into a lot of happy hunters in the field.



Rooster pheasant being released.

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Serving Dubois, Rawlins, Lander , Riverton and places between

Under the Water

Lucky Pond aerator



Installation of Lucky Pond aerator

Lucky Pond is a 4.6-acre reservoir on public land near the Wyoming Life Resource Center and is considered Lander's community fishery. Sport fish found in Lucky Pond include stocked rainbow trout and channel catfish and naturally-reproducing green sunfish/bluegill hybrids.

Angling success at Lucky Pond has been inconsistent, likely due to periodic fish kills that reduced fish numbers and prevented fish from growing to larger sizes. For example, a summer kill event in Sep. 2012 left high numbers of dead trout, sunfish, and fathead minnows along the Lucky Pond shoreline. Evidence of large winter kill events have occurred over the years as well. After some research, sampling fish and taking dis-

solved oxygen and temperature profiles, biologists determined that low dissolved oxygen levels were the probable cause.

To prevent future fish kills, an aeration system was installed this August. The aerator has already substantially raised dissolved oxygen levels and should greatly improve the fishery. However, winter ice fishing will no longer be possible because the aerator will prevent ice from freezing solidly enough to walk on. For safety, the access road was closed on Nov. 25 and will re-open when the ice melts next spring. People using the area and their pets are advised not to venture onto the ice due to hazardous conditions.

The installation of the Lucky Pond aerator was a great example of the community coming together to create a better fishery for Lander-area residents. Planning for and installation of the aerator were conducted by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and Wyoming Life Resource Center. Monetary donations (over \$18,000) for the aerator itself and providing electrical power to the aerator were received from the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resource Trust, Lander District Recreation Board, and the Popo Agie Anglers.



Fish found dead from 2012 summer kill event.



With the Carnivores

Seasonal employees are much appreciated



From top left, clockwise: Sam Stephens, Colby Clark, Kyle Bales, and Clint Atkinson.

November sees us saying goodbye to most of our At-Will Contract Employees (AWECs). While we've always stressed that large carnivore AWEC's have one of the best biologist positions a young wildlife professional can attain, it doesn't mean it's easy or forgiving. Our AWECs do a lot of the low glamour work from cleaning up carcass remains to entering harvest data and maintaining capture gear. The lifestyle of young wildlife professionals is foreign to many. They often live nomadically in campers, tents, and shacks, and make the sacrifices necessary in order to hopefully some day get a full-time job in wildlife management.

A monumental thank you and acknowledgment to all of our field personnel. This was one of the busiest seasons to date for black and grizzly bear management, and they went above and beyond to get the job done while maintaining a positive outlook and even having a few laughs. Thank you for the countless hours and undying efforts over the past several months. The large carnivore section, the wildlife division and the Game and Fish wouldn't work without your tireless efforts and sacrifice!



On the Ground

Bain Meadow Farming



Habitat & Access personnel Miles Proctor, Zach Gregory and John Lee were busy this fall farming Bain Meadow at Spence & Moriarity Wildlife Management Area (WMA) near Dubois. Once they finished haying and shipping the hay to Bench Corral feedground, farming began in earnest. After picking up the gated pipe, approximately 70 acres were farmed and leveled. The field was planted down using a seed mix that includes meadow brome, orchard grass, rye and spreader alfalfa. This spring an annual cover crop will be drilled in to help mitigate topsoil movement and provide a beneficial micro-climate to support grass establishment.

Farming Bain Meadow on Spence & Moriarity Wildlife Management Area.

The crew was also able to disc Side-roll Meadow on the WMA a couple times before winter set in. Grant monies helped fund a pivot sprinkler that will be constructed prior to April 2016. Side-roll Meadow will be planted into a cover crop of hay barley or oats for the 2016 growing season, then farmed again next fall prior to planting the field down to grass.

The good quality hay produced at Spence & Moriarity WMA is shipped to Bench Corral feedground to feed elk during the winter months. This allows the Game and Fish to double the benefit of this ground by generating feed to benefit elk in Sublette County and provide supplemental winter forage for elk wintering on the WMA and Whiskey Basin Wildlife Habitat Management Area.

Little Popo Agie Outhouse

Habitat & Access, who are charged with maintaining Public Access Areas (PAAs) across the state, partnered with the National Outdoor Leadership School's Wilderness Medicine Institute (WMI) to purchase a new concrete outhouse located at the upstream Little Popo Agie PAA in Red Canyon Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA). WMI and Game and Fish shared the cost of this new structure.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission own the access and parking easements on the land owned by WMI, as part of WMI's Wyss Campus south of Lander. This easement provides access for fishermen to the Little Popo Agie. WMI also uses this area of their land to run various wilderness medicine courses. Ron McCall, Gates Richards and Melissa Gray, all from WMI were very helpful coordinating efforts and coordinated financial support.



Crane assisting outhouse placement.



The new outhouse is compliant with the American with Disabilities Act and is fully wheelchair accessible. A concrete parking pad will be poured in the spring to further facilitate access. Maintenance of this and other outhouses across the Region is completed by local contractors.



New outhouse at the upstream Little Popo Agie Public Access Area.

In addition to assisting with the outhouse install, Derek Lemon got Red Canyon WHMA and Ocean Lake WHMA ready for winter by replacing signs and pulling boat docks. Derek helped prep for the pheasant hunts at Ocean Lake and Sand Mesa. Derek also wrapped up contracts for a new wildlife friendly fence and irrigation pipeline at Red Canyon.

With the Public

December meetings



Jason Hunter and Stan Harter lead a small group discussion on season recommendations.

the area before making any future recommendations. Notes from these meetings will be available on the Lander Regional Office Webpage in the near future (<https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Regional-Offices/Lander-Region>). We would like to thank everyone who attended these meetings and we appreciate all of the feedback we received.

Lander Region personnel conducted our annual post season information gathering meetings in Lander, Riverton, Rawlins and Dubois again this year to gather information from the public prior to setting seasons for 2016. The meetings were well attended again this year with approximately 110 people in attendance with 45 of those being new to Game and Fish public meetings.

The Lander/Green Mountain Mule Deer Working Group hunting season proposal was discussed at the Lander, Riverton and Rawlins meetings to gather more input from hunters in



Beside the Families

Big game hunting



Nicole and Justin Kempf, with Nicole's first big game animal!

Forever Wild Families went afield again this month for deer and pheasant hunting. Two deer were harvested by the Kempf family thanks to their guide Brian Rognon and to the planning and contacts made by Jason Hunter and Greg Anderson. Pheasant hunting excursions were made possible by Daryl Lutz and Teal Joseph. Coming up, families may have the opportunity for more hunting as well as a plan your hunt workshop and some ice fishing.

Check out the Lander Region Webpage for more great information!

<https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Regional-Offices/Lander-Region>