



# Wyoming Game and Fish Department

## Sheridan Region June 2015 Newsletter

### Sheridan Region

**Regional Wildlife Supervisor:**

Joe Gilbert

**Regional Fisheries Supervisor:**

Paul Mavrakis

**Office Managers:**

Lori Roe  
Kathy Boyles

**Clerical Specialists:**

Wendy Balkenbush  
Stephanie Bomar

**Game Wardens:**

Dayton: Dustin Shorma  
Sheridan: Bruce Scigliano  
Buffalo: Jim Seeman  
Kaycee: Grant Gerharter  
N. Gillette: Jackie Otto  
S. Gillette: Dustin Kirsch  
Moorcroft: J.D. Davis  
Investigator: Scott Adell

**Public Information Specialist:**

Bud Stewart

**Wildlife Biologists :**

Wildlife Management Coordinator:  
Lynn Jahnke  
Sheridan: Tim Thomas  
Buffalo: Dan Thiele  
Gillette: Erika Peckham  
Terrestrial Habitat: Todd Caltrider

**PLPW Program Coordinator:**

Troy Tobiasson

**Fish Biologists:**

Bill Bradshaw  
Andrew Nikirk  
Aquatic Habitat: Travis Cundy

**Habitat and Access Coordinator:**

Seth Roseberry

**Aquatic Invasive Species:**

Greg Downey

**Story Fish Hatchery:**

Superintendent: Steve Diekema  
Senior Fish Culturist: Jared Smith  
Culturist: Jennifer Meineke

**Sheridan Bird Farm:**

Supervisor: Darrell Meineke  
Biologist: Nate Brown  
Technician: Kurt Heiser

### Sheridan Bird Farm—From Floods to Peeping in June

In early June a cloudburst dumped several inches of rain at the Sheridan Bird Farm and about 12,000 pheasant chick were in peril due to water standing in the brooder houses. A quick response by bird farm employees and several volunteers from the local Pheasants Forever chapter saved the chicks by getting dry bedding into the brooder houses.

By the end of June things were back to normal at the bird farm and “peepers” (small blinders), that prevent the pheasant chicks from pecking each other and removing excessive feathers, were affixed to each chick.



*Six to eight inches of water cover a road at the Sheridan Bird Farm after a cloud burst dumped several inches of rain in the area on June 5, 2015. The basement of the residence in the background was flooded.*

*A “peeper” is affixed to a pheasant chick at the Sheridan Bird Farm. The small plastic shield prevents the young pheasants from pecking and removing feathers from each other.*



# Sheridan Region Monthly Newsletter

## June 2015

### G&F Employees Participate in Torch Run



Sheridan Region Office Manager Lori Roe and her son Nate, Private Lands Public Wildlife Coordinator Troy Tobiasson and Wildlife Investigator Scott Adell participated in the Special Olympics' Unified Relay Across America torch run to kickoff the Special Olympics World Games in July/August 2015 in Los Angeles, CA. The run, billed as a once in a lifetime experience, will deliver the Flame of Hope from Athens, Greece to Los Angeles for the 2015 World Summer Games.

Joining the G&F employees on the Unified Relay team were Special Olympic athletes from RENEW and employees from the Sheridan Police Department, Sheridan County Sheriffs Office and Wyoming Highway Patrol.

*Sheridan Region Office Manager Lori Roe (with torch), her son Nate (in white shirt) and Troy Tobiasson (far right) participate in the Special Olympics' Unified Relay Across America torch run.*

### Brown Trout Samples Collected for Future DNA Study



*Sheridan Regional Fish Management Supervisor Paul Mavrakis uses a backpack electrofishing unit to capture brown trout on the Little Tongue River.*

*Clipped off pieces of brown trout fins are placed on specially designed paper so they can be sent to a lab in Montana to develop a genetic marker.*



The Sheridan Region Fish Management Crew collected brown trout tissue samples from the Little Tongue River and submitted them to the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Missoula, MT. The tissue samples will be used to develop a unique genetic marker for brown trout that will allow the use of environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling that can detect the presence of a species from traces of DNA in the environment. To determine if brown trout are present in a stream water is pumped through a microfilter that collects any DNA present in the water. The collected DNA is analyzed for the unique maker for brown trout (or other fish species). When the marker is detected, it can be assumed that the species is present somewhere upstream from where the sample was taken. The Fish Management Crew will use the eDNA technique on Elkhorn Creek to ensure that brook and brown trout were completely eradicated by rotenone treatments, and only Yellowstone cutthroat trout remain in the stream.



# Sheridan Region Monthly Newsletter

## June 2015

### Game Wardens & Biologists Attend Trapping and Transport Training

On June 17th, 2015 Wyoming Game Wardens and Biologists from around the state attended a trapping workshop at the Amsden Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WMHA) near Dayton. The workshop was put on by retired South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Warden Blair Waite. Waite, owner of the Hancock Trap Company, has over 40 years experience trapping and is an expert on trapping laws and enforcement.

Waite spent the morning going over just about every kind of trap conceivable and described its application in the field, as well as the life histories of furbearing and predatory animals that are found in Wyoming. The afternoon was spent visiting nine different stations where traps had been set by Waite the previous day. These stations were in places where an expert trapper would have set a trap. Workshop participants had to locate the traps without touching them, describe what kind of trap or snare had been set and what particular animal is targeted. The workshop will help game wardens and biologists with trapping cases in the future.

The following day, June 18<sup>th</sup>, Game and Fish Large Carnivore Biologists Brian DeBolt and Luke Ellsbury instructed a course in trapping, handling and managing conflicts with trophy game (bears and mountain lions) animals. Much of the class was hands on training which will benefit game wardens and biologists when they encounter bear and lion conflicts in the future.



*Retired South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Warden Blair Waite instructs a trapping workshop held at Amsden WMHA. Waite, owner of the Hancock Trap Company, has over 40 years experience trapping and is an expert on trapping laws and enforcement.*

*Buffalo Game Warden Jim Seeman (on left) and Sheridan Region PLPW Coordinator Troy Tobiasson inspect a trapping station that had been placed for the workshop. Workshop participants had to locate the traps at each station, identify what furbearing species were being targeted and determine if trapping laws were being followed in each scenario.*





# Sheridan Region Monthly Newsletter

## June 2015

### Willows Planted as Part of Adopt a Trout Program



*Tongue River Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> graders prepare willow shoots for planting during the Adopt a Trout Program on their last day of school.*



*Sheridan Region Aquatic Habitat Biologist Travis Cundy (on right) demonstrates how the water jet stinger works to make a small hole where the prepared willow shoots can be planted.*

Tongue River Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> graders participated in the final event of Trout Unlimited's Tongue River Adopt a Trout project by planting willows along Columbus Creek, a tributary to the Tongue River. The class has been involved with the Adopt a Trout project since last fall when brown and rainbow trout in the Tongue River were implanted with radio tags. The students "adopted" a radio tagged trout and plotted the fish's movement in the river over the winter and into the spring using GIS technology.

On the last day of school in early June, the students planted about 250 willows to stabilize stream banks and create habitat along Columbus Creek. The willows were planted using manual stingers and a water jet stinger system. The water jet stinger utilizes pressurized water to create a small diameter hole in the stream bank where a willow shoot can be planted.

### Sage-grouse Lek Counts Trend Upward in 2015



The 2015 sage-grouse lek monitoring effort for the Northeast Wyoming Local Working Group checked 84% (337 of 402) of the known leks. The average number of male sage-grouse counted per lek was 16 in 2015 compared to 10 in 2014. The 2015 count was the highest since 2008 when 18 male sage-grouse were counted per lek.

*A male sage-grouse displays during the breeding season on a lek in northeast Wyoming.*