



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Sheridan Region
September 2015 Newsletter

Sheridan Region

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Kaycee: Grant Gerharter
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S. Gillette: Dustin Kirsch
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Wildlife Management Coordinator:
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Gillette: Erika Peckham
Terrestrial Habitat: Todd Caltrider

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Fish Biologists:

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Aquatic Habitat: Travis Cundy

Habitat and Access Coordinator:

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Aquatic Invasive Species:

Greg Downey

Story Fish Hatchery:

Superintendent: Steve Diekema
Senior Fish Culturist: Brad Hughes
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Sheridan Bird Farm:

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

Rebirth of a Lodgepole Pine Forest



Aerial view in 2012 of area where the Gilead Fire burned northwest of Buffalo, some of which was within the Bud Love Wildlife Habitat Management Area.

In August and September of 2012 the Gilead Fire burned over 8,000 acres of grassland and forest habitat northwest of Buffalo including a substantial amount of lodgepole pine forest. Just three years later the forest is returning with new lodgepole pine seedlings established. Lodgepole pine have serotinous cones that require fire to open the cone so the seed can begin to grow.



Lodgepole seedlings sprout among the charred trees that produced the seed source cones.



Close up of the lodgepole seedlings in the Gilead Fire area near Buffalo in September 2015.



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Wetland Rehabilitated for Finescale Dace Habitat



The wetland complex on the Black Hills National forest that was rehabilitated for finescale dace habitat.



A step pool series was built below the rehabilitated wetland to facilitate fish passage for finescale dace.

Aquatic Habitat Biologist Travis Cundy coordinated with the Black Hills National Forest on a project to rehabilitate a wetland and create fish passage for finescale dace in the headwaters of Middle Redwater Creek. The water surface elevation at the lower end of the wetland complex was raised about one half foot, the developing head cut was stabilized with sheet piling and rock, and a step pool series was constructed below the wetland to provide fish passage. Finescale dace are considered a fish species of greatest conservation need.

Cheatgrass Control to Improve Wildlife Habitat

In September, Terrestrial Habitat Biologist Todd Caltrider completed a cheatgrass spraying project north of Gillette near Wild Horse Creek. The project involved treating 586 acres by aerially applying imazipic herbicide to control cheatgrass infestations. Cheatgrass is an invasive annual grass that competes with native wildlife forage plants for resources; thus limiting the productivity of Wyoming's rangelands for wildlife and domestic livestock. The area treated is a mixture of Bureau of Land Management and private land that is used extensively by elk, mule deer, pronghorn and sage grouse. Funding for the project was provided by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Bureau of Land Management, the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, and the participating landowner.



The helicopter flies away from the ground support vehicle after refueling and refilling with herbicide.



A helicopter was used to treat 586 acres of rangeland north of Gillette to control invasive plants.



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Construction Nearly Complete on Fishing Pond in Newcastle

It has been a long time in the making but soon anglers in the Newcastle area will have a fishing pond right in town. The pond resulted from the collaborative efforts of numerous partners, including the Newcastle Country Club (supplied the land for the pond), Wyoming Refining Company (provided funding and will supply the water via a Madison Formation well), Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust (provided funding), Wyoming Wildlife—The Foundation (provided funding), Weston Co. Conservation District (provided funding), Wyoming Game and Fish Department (provided funding and in-kind labor), Powder River Energy Corporation (provided poles for the fishing pier) and Wyoming Game and Fish Commissioner Keith Culver (supplied trees for fish habitat).

The pond will have a fishing pier that will provide access for anglers that are physically challenged. Upon completion, the water will be stocked with largemouth bass, yellow perch, crappie and channel catfish. Trout may be stocked in the fall to provide additional ice fishing opportunity.



In early September the pond started to take shape when soil excavation got underway.



Juniper trees were placed in the pond to diversify the habitat for fish (photo above and below).



The fishing pier started to take form when utility line poles were placed along the west bank of the pond.





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Hunter Cited for Trespassing and Waste of Edible Portions of Meat

Kaycee Game Warden Grant Gerharter responded to a report of off-road vehicle use near the Hazelton Road. Arriving at the scene, Gerharter encountered a hunter that had harvested a 6 x 6 bull elk. After talking to the hunter at his camp and checking the meat removed from the elk, Gerharter found the hunter had not taken the back straps and tenderloins from the elk. The hunter was informed that he was required to take all edible portions of meat from the animal. About an hour later, Gerharter contacted the hunter again as he was heading home. Further investigation revealed the hunter had trespassed to harvest the bull elk, had driven off road past the sign shown below, and had not retrieved the tenderloins and back straps from the elk carcass. The individual was cited for trespassing and waste of edible portions of meat. The antlers from the bull elk were seized. The individual pled guilty to the charges.



The hunter Game Warden Gerharter contacted had driven past this sign to hunt and retrieve a harvested elk.



Game Warden Gerharter removed the backstrap from the bull elk to show the amount of meat that was left at the scene of the kill.

Mule Deer Bucks Poached West of Sheridan



Mule deer buck shot and killed west of Sheridan with only the head removed.

In late September two mule deer bucks were killed west of Sheridan and only the heads were removed; no meat was removed from either of the animals. One was killed at the intersection of Soldier Creek Road and Keystone Road near the Sheridan County Sportsmen's Club. The other was killed about 1 ½ miles northwest of Beckton along Sheridan County Road 89.

Killing a big or trophy game animal and leaving the meat to rot is a violation of Wyoming statute 23-3-107(a). A cash reward is available for those who provide information that leads to the arrest and conviction of any person violating this statute.