



Volunteers stock brook trout on Pole Mountain

The Laramie Region celebrates Free Fishing Day a little differently than the rest of the state. While you can still fish for free throughout the Laramie Region on the first Saturday in June, that day is also reserved for one of the Game and Fish Department's biggest volunteer efforts: stocking brook trout in numerous ponds on Pole Mountain.

This year, nearly 150 volunteers helped Laramie Region fisheries managers stock 20,000 fingerling brook trout in nearly 150 ponds in the Pole Mountain area. Located between Cheyenne and Laramie, the Pole Mountain area is dotted with hundreds of beaver ponds teeming with brook trout. Many portions of streams do not have the habitat conducive to trout spawning, so to meet angler demands the ponds are stocked annually.

Effectively stocking hundreds of ponds scattered over thousands of acres is a labor intensive job, requiring a lot of people. To accomplish this, the Game and Fish Department solicits the help of volunteers. It's a great family outing, with many families bringing their small children along to help. The children enjoy seeing the fish and helping release them into their new homes.





Photo by Biff Burton

Flooding in the Laramie Region

Heavy rain and snow this spring resulted in flooding in major rivers and streams throughout the Laramie Region. Water in Sybille Creek at the high point of flooding was running at 3,000 cubic feet per second. Local residents say this is the highest they have seen the water in decades. Unfortunately, debris completely tore out a water gap (photo below at right), allowing two captive moose to escape from the Tom Thorne/Beth Williams Wildlife Research Center at Sybille. (See story on page 3). The staff at Sybille is in the process of repairing fencing throughout the facility and they expect it to take most of the summer to recover from the flooding.

Flooding in southern Goshen County closed several roads north of LaGrange, including the road to Hawk Springs Reservoir. With stream flow exceeding culvert capacities, Horse Creek spilled over county roads and created unsafe driving conditions in some areas. The road to the reservoir held up well, and after being closed for nearly two weeks, it was reopened just in time for Memorial Day weekend. In the photo below on the left, the Laramie River is shown flowing close to the Guernsey Highway.

In the western part of the Laramie Region, Saratoga also received abundant rainfall and the North Platte River reached flood stage in May. Treasure Island Public Access Area (photo above) was available to boaters in late May, but the water levels rose again in early June. Boaters should be aware that high water levels can prevent boats from passing under local bridges. The North Platte River also flooded the Foote Public Access Area.

Public access areas on the river can become hazardous, and boat travel on the flooded river can be treacherous and life-threatening. Please use caution and avoid high water.



Photo by Martin Hicks



Photo by Mary Wood

Rough Month for Moose



This elderly cow moose died in the Cottonwood Creek Drainage. The cause of death is likely physiological stress from several factors, including old age. Notice the cow's attempt to grow antlers.



May was a rough month for moose in the Upper Platte Valley. Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton examined two moose that died of physiological stress and disease (photos at left and right). The cold wet snows of April, combined with parasites, can often be too challenging for some wild animals at the end of a long, cold winter. Even if they survive the weather, wild animals often meet their fates in fatal accidents, such as a young bull moose that died when trapped in a cattle guard near the Platte River Wilderness (center photo above). A fourth moose was hit by a vehicle on Wyoming Highway 130 on the Snowy Range on May 30.



Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton loads a cow moose that died in the Ryan Park area. He awaits results of a necropsy to determine why it died.

The Great Moose Escape

After water damaged fences at the Tom Thorne/Beth Williams Wildlife Research Center at Sybille (see photo, page 2), Laramie Region personnel teamed up to recover two moose that escaped from the facility.

The moose were both located and tranquilized. Then came the backbreaking task of carrying one of the moose through the trees and up a steep hill. Eventually the crew got the moose to a place where they could use a four wheeler to help pull it the rest of the way out. Back at the pens, the biologists administered reversal drugs to help the cows recover from the tranquilizer. At the end of the day both moose were safely back at the facility and doing well.



Encampment goes green

Aquatic Habitat Biologist Christina Barrineau, Fish Technician Betsy Morgan, and Katie Deroche, with the Colorado/Wyoming American Fisheries Society, spent a sunny May morning with the fifth and sixth grade classes from Encampment School along the Encampment River.

Trout Unlimited and Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District were also on hand to lead educational activities including nature walks, stream flow measurements and journal writing. Turning the Encampment River green to estimate stream flow was a huge hit with the students.



Photo by Christina Barrineau

Hunt Planner Workshop

Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood worked with Hunter Education Coordinator Tristanna Bickford, Web Master Chris Botkins and License Section Manager Jennifer Doering to host a workshop for hunters in May.

The workshop covered in-depth instructions for using the "Hunt Planner" on the department's website, tips for finding hunting access via private landowners or the department's Access Yes programs and how to apply for big game licenses.

A web-cast was recorded from the workshop and should soon be available online at the Wyoming Game and Fish Department website: wgfd.wyo.gov.

Breeding stock pheasants released

After collecting enough pheasant eggs for the year's hatch, Downar Bird Farm personnel released the 2016 pheasant brood flock in several locations around southern Goshen County.

With plenty of cover and moisture this spring, rearing success for these birds should remain high as it has over the past two years and help bolster the wild pheasant population for the upcoming hunting season.



Personnel from the Laramie Region are busy this time of year, but several still found time to take first grade students from Beitel Elementary School fishing at Huck Finn Pond in Laramie. The children were all smiles when the fish were biting! Photos by Jerry Cowles.





Young hunter gets first bear

Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton was pleased to register a young hunter's first bear. The 14-year-old hunter, shown in center of photo, shot the bear with a .375 caliber rifle. He said he didn't even feel the rifle kick. He shot the sow in the Sierra Madre Mountains west of Saratoga. His older brother, shown at right, harvested his first bear in 2015.

Meet the Warden

Cheyenne Game Warden Shawn Blajszczak and North Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd will host a "Meet the Warden" event at Cheyenne's Sportsman's Warehouse from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, July 9. Sportsman's Warehouse is located at 3745 E. Lincoln Way.



"This is a great opportunity for people who just want to chat with a game warden," said Robin Kepple, information specialist for the Game and Fish Department. "It gives our wardens an opportunity, in a neutral setting, to hear about what's going on locally and what is on hunters' minds. We encourage all those who are interested to attend."

For more information please call (307) 777-4523 or send an email to robin.kepple@wyo.gov.

GeoPDF coming soon

Do you like technology? If so you'll probably like this news.

Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood says plans are underway to create interactive mapping applications for all Walk-In Hunting and Fishing Areas.

Also, all Hunter Management Area maps will have an updated look with smart-phone friendly "GeoPDF" features. These new features will allow hunters to download maps to their GPS-enabled phone at home, and then use their phone to navigate the access area, even if the area doesn't have a cellular signal.

This is great news for sportsmen who will be able to accurately navigate to all their favorite hunting and fishing spots.



News signs at Grayrocks PAA

The Laramie Region Habitat and Access crew updated signs at Grayrocks Public Access Area to inform the public of positive changes the region and Laramie River power station agreed upon. All off-road vehicle use is now prohibited on the Grayrocks PAA due to concerns for public safety. The limit for camping has also been reduced from 14 days to 7 days to address overcrowding issues.

Wick WHMA opens

The Wick Wildlife Habitat Management Area opened on May 16. With the soil nearly saturated and potential for road damage, it was determined that it would be safer if the gates remained closed to vehicles until daylight hours instead of the usual midnight opening.

By the time the gates were opened at 8 a.m. there were more than 50 people waiting to drive onto the Wick WHMA to collect antlers or go fishing.

The Wick WHMA is closed to human traffic from Nov. 15 through May 15 each year to give big game animals a safe place to spend the winter.

Each year between 600 and 800 elk use this area as their winter range, during which time the bulls drop their antlers.

When the snow begins to melt, Elk Mountain Game Warden Ryan Kenneda spends many hours patrolling the Wick to keep early antler hunters from trespassing and collecting antlers early.

The 22,942-acre wildlife habitat management area is six miles southeast of Elk Mountain and five miles west of Arlington along Interstate Highway 80. Four major drainages cross the mountainous terrain along the southern portion, and elevations range from 7,000 feet to almost 9,000 feet.



Habitat talk

Nearly 30 people attended the Platte Valley Habitat Speaker Series in Saratoga. Lusha Tronstad of the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database presented a talk on Wyoming's mollusks and crustaceans. The Platte Valley Habitat Speaker Series is a bi-monthly presentation on fish, wildlife, and habitat topics for residents in the Platte Valley.

Meetings to discuss Platte Valley mule deer management

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department will hold a series of collaborative meetings to discuss mule deer management in the Platte Valley.

The meetings will review accomplishments during the past five years of the Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative process, and gather input on management direction for the next five years.

Cheyenne: Monday, July 18, 6 p.m. at the WGFD Headquarters,

Trout Room, 5400 Bishop Blvd.

Laramie: Tuesday, July 19, 6 p.m., U.W. Biodiversity Institute - Berry Center, Corner of E. Lewis and N. 9th Streets

Rawlins: Wednesday, July 20, 6 p.m., Jeffery Center, 315 West Pine St.

Saratoga: Thursday, July 21, 6 p.m., Saratoga Town Hall, 110 E. Spring Ave.

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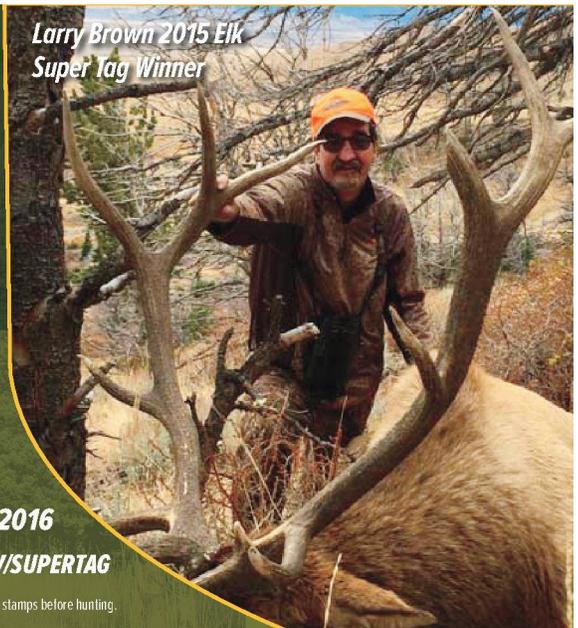
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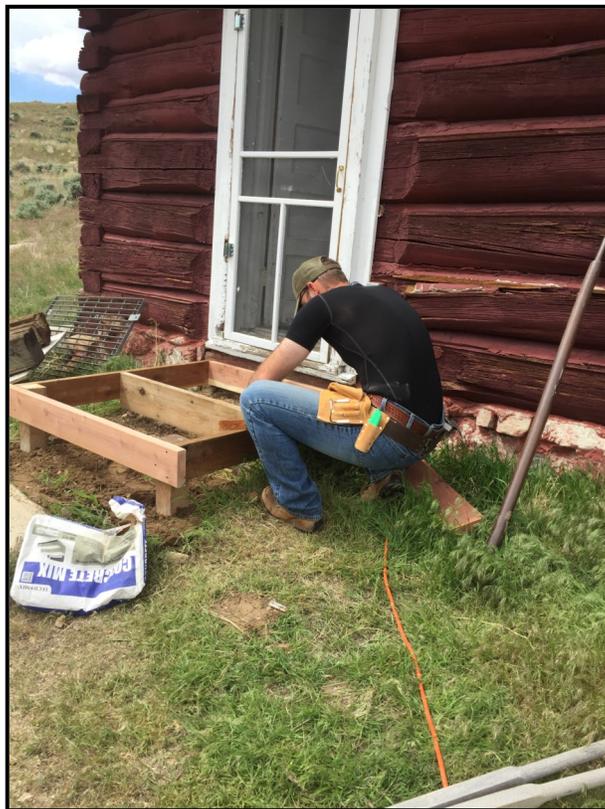
Hunt for disabled veterans

During May, Cheyenne Game Warden Shawn Blajszczak worked in conjunction with Hunting with Heroes, an non-profit disabled veterans hunting organization, to set up a hunt this upcoming fall. Blajszczak offered to do this out of respect and honor for our United States disabled veterans.



Blajszczak acquired access on Doug and Susie Samuelsson's ranch for up to 10 antelope hunters on October 7-9. He then began working on setting up guides, venues for banquets and lodging during any free time he had.

Hopefully this event will go off without a hitch this upcoming year so we can give a little back to the veterans who gave so much for us.



Making repairs

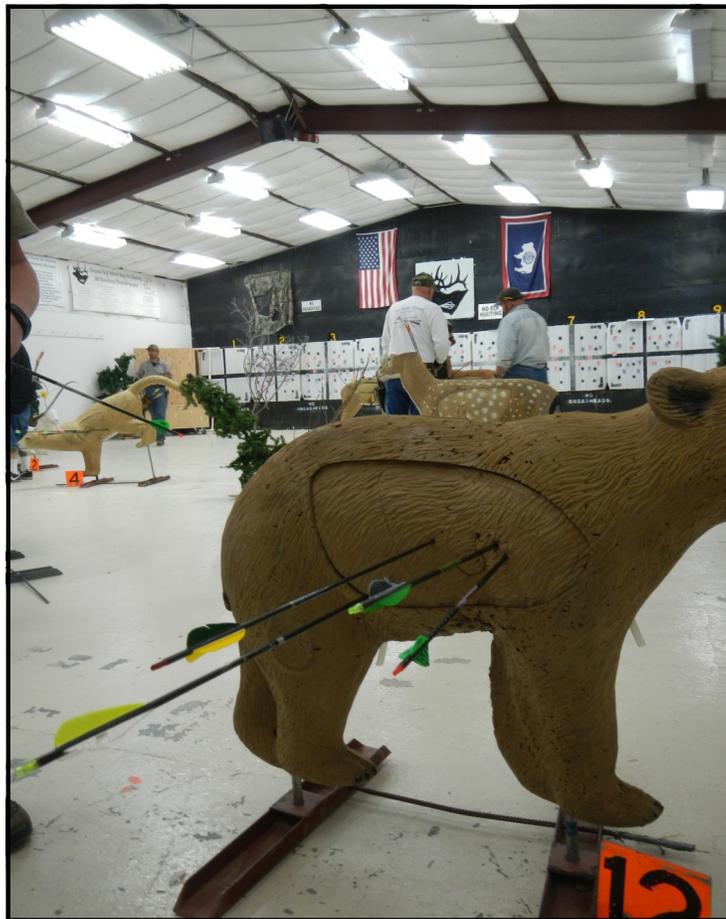
Medicine Bow Game Warden Jake Kettley built a new back step/deck at the Medicine Bow warden station. This spruced things up considerably by replacing a deck that was built many years ago. Kettley also replaced the step at the Kortez cabin using scraps from the warden station. Game wardens handle much of the maintenance and repairs at their warden stations as part of their regular job duties.

Welcome, Sterling!

Thanks to a federal grant, the Access Yes program now has an extra hand, Sterling Spilinek.

Sterling will be helping with sign maintenance and hunter/angler contacts in the Laramie Region this summer and fall.

He became familiar with the Access Yes programs when he was the Laramie Peak Hunt Coordinator during the 2015 elk season in Area 7 and is now excited to continue working with the program through the rest of this year! Welcome to the Access Yes program, Sterling!



Field Archers help Access Yes

Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood visited the Cheyenne Field Archers facility for the first night of their annual Access Yes fundraiser. Members and visitors of all ages had a great time while raising money to help fund Walk-In and Hunter Management Areas. The Field Archers have put on these shoots for more than 10 years and have raised a significant amount of money for the program through their efforts, as well as in garnering additional support from their partner organization, Bowhunters of Wyoming.



Swift Water Rescue Training

Medicine Bow Game Warden Ryan Kenneda and Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton attended a swift water rescue training put on by the Saratoga Search and Rescue with the Saratoga Fire Dept. in preparation for spring flooding season.

The course was taught by Dvorak Expeditions of Rescue 3 International and was a three-day certification course to have the participant become a swift water rescue technician. One day was spent in the classroom and the other two were in the North Platte River and Saratoga Reservoir.

Kenneda and Burton studied hydrology, risk assessments, incident management, searching methods, swift water swimming techniques, tension lines and river crossing techniques, boat flipping and much more before conducting scenarios. This was a very professional class and highly recommended for anyone who spends time on swift water or may be in a position to aid search and rescue in person and equipment rescue.

Simunitions training

Elk Mountain Game Warden Ryan Kenneda and Cheyenne Game Warden Shawn Blajczak joined other Game and Fish wardens to host a Simunitions training for the Laramie Region at Glendo State park in May.

The scenario-based training will help wardens prepare for the summer boating season. It places the officers in a stressful, yet safe, situation and teaches them to perform their duties under strained conditions.

Decision making, marksmanship, use of force when making an arrest and medical follow-up were demonstrated or discussed in each scenario.

While each officer manages stress in different ways, the training demonstrated that they were able to perform professionally and accomplish their goals based on many possible outcomes of the different scenarios.



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