

December 2011

# Powder River News

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**SEASONS GREETINGS**

## *BOARD OF SUPERVISORS*

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## *NRCS STAFF*

District Conservationist-  
Allison McKenzie

Rangeland Management  
Specialist-Kassie Bales

## Partnering to Help Sage Grouse

Conservation groups across Wyoming have been working and continue to work to keep the Sage-Grouse off of the endangered or threatened species list. The Powder River Conservation District and the Kaycee NRCS are no different. With the rising concern with Sage Grouse fatalities from striking fence lines, the PRCD and NRCS have partnered with the Johnson County 4-H Junior Leaders and the Livestock Judging Team to construct 10,000 fence markers. This partnership allows the two 4-H groups to raise funds for their various projects and helps reduce the cost to the PRCD to provide fence markers to landowners involved in the NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) Program. Fence markers will be given to landowners currently enrolled in a NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative Program to be attached to fence lines that lay within 0.6 tenths of a mile in the vicinity of a Sage Grouse Lek to reduce the threat of fence strikes to Sage Grouse.

The PRCD would like to thank the Junior Leaders, the Livestock Judging team, and their parents for all of their hard work and dedication to this project.

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## Kaycee Park Work Day

A fresh coat of paint and a little mulch goes a long way.... Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> kicked off National 4-H Week, to celebrate this occasion the Powder River Conservation District



worked with the 4-H clubs (Powder River, Outlaw, and Cactus) from the Kaycee area and Kelly Norris from Wyoming State Forestry to hold a work day in the Kaycee Park. Thirty-two 4-H members, leaders and members of the community joined forces to paint the graffiti covered building and a round concrete structure, seven picnic tables, and eight trash cans to give the park a fresh new look. They also mulched thirty-seven young trees and removed three tree stumps.



These new efforts paired with the work done earlier this summer by the PRCD on the Park entrance have gone a long way to make the Kaycee Park a beautiful place once again. Please take a moment to go and see improvements. It is amazing the difference a little paint, mulch and elbow grease can make.

The PRCD would also like to take this opportunity to thank the following people/organizations for making this project possible. The Town of Kaycee for letting us do the project and the use of the truck and trailer to haul the mulch. Powder River Energy for the mulch, Chancy and Kelly Winsor for loading the mulch for us, the Largent family for the use of their generator and wheel barrels, the Staf-



ford family for the use of their paint sprayer, Joyce Black for scraping paint, hauling mulch, and picking up tree branches, the kids from the First Southern Baptist Chapel Youth Group for their time, and finally thank you for everyone who came in to help. Without all of you we would not have been able to make this day possible.

## Kaycee Sage-Grouse Monitoring Day

Producers working with NRCS in the Kaycee field office got a chance to learn more about protecting sage-grouse habitat this summer. About 12 people, including five ranchers and their wives, participated in Sage-Grouse Monitoring Day Aug. 25 on Bob Harlan's personal ranch.



Bob has been an instrumental part of the Sage-Grouse Initiative (SGI) program. He was one of the first producers to sign up and is always willing to offer his place for people to learn on. "It's kind of a change to be a range manager with money," he said.

Bob and his wife Lynn are true stewards of the land. They run a sheep and cattle operation. They have decided to take their whole incentive payment and put the money right back into the land. "It only makes sense from a range manager standpoint to take this opportunity to better the land for the livestock and wildlife, both."

Bob and Lynn have installed cross fences to help with his grazing rotation and are about to install a new pipeline to add water to areas that were not utilized in the past. Bob also leased two additional mountain camps to help relieve the pressure off his rangeland.

Along with the Harlans, many of the other producers have either leased additional land or cut their herds back to give their range a rest and allow sage-grouse habitat to flourish. Sage-Grouse Monitoring Day was hosted by the NRCS Kaycee field office. Helping with the event were Allison McKenzie, district conservationist with the Buffalo field office, Ryan Murray, field support rangeland management specialist in Buffalo, and Kassie Bales, rangeland management specialist in Kaycee.

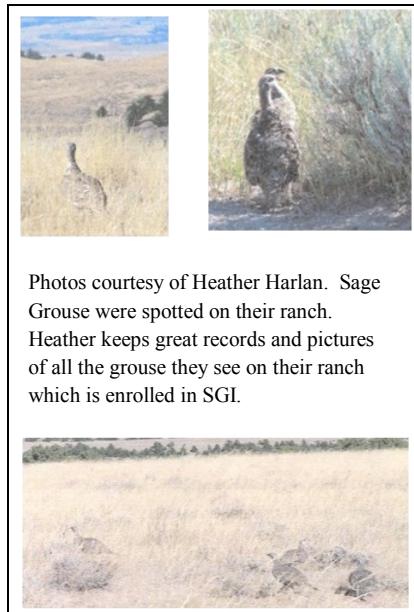
The Monitoring Day was created to teach producers how to do the range monitoring on their own places that is required through SGI, said Bales.



Joe Curuchet, son of Mike Curuchet who has a SGI contract with NRCS came along to do some monitoring and takes special interest in the sage.

"Ryan was very gracious to help us teach them all how to setup and carryout the monitoring on their own ranches. We are hoping that by teaching them all to do the monitoring they will be able to carry it out with little assistance and continue to use the monitoring when their SGI contracts have expired."

Overall, the event was a success. "All of the producers were very excited to learn the monitoring process and implement it on their ranch. They are looking at the SGI program as a chance to learn how to better manage their ranches for the future." Bales said.



Photos courtesy of Heather Harlan. Sage Grouse were spotted on their ranch. Heather keeps great records and pictures of all the grouse they see on their ranch which is enrolled in SGI.

## PLANT FACTS

**Common Name:** Western Ragweed

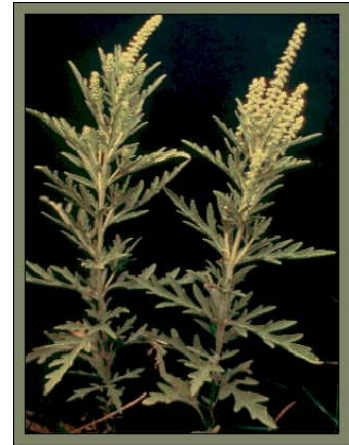
**Species:** *Ambrosia psilostachya*

**Life Span:** Perennial

**Origin:** Native

**Season:** Warm

**Growth Form:** monoecious forb; erect, branching above; flowers August to October, reproduces from roots and seeds; forms extensive colonies from creeping rootstocks.



**Vegetative Characteristics:**

**Leaves:** alternate and opposite, simple; blades lanceolate to oblong; margins are entire to toothed; surfaces are covered with appressed, pustular-based hairs.

**Stems:** erect, simple below, branched above, hirsute to pubescent with ascending hairs.

**Floral and Fruit Characteristics:**

**Inflorescences:** staminate heads in racemes, pistillate heads in axillary clusters below staminate heads

**Flowers:** unisexual, heads discoid; yellow

**Fruits:** achene; enclosed in a hard spiny “bur” formed by the indurate involucre

**Historic, Food and Medicinal Uses:** leaves were steeped by American Indians and used as a treatment for sore eyes; pollen causes hay fever.

**Livestock Losses:** may accumulate nitrates, milk produced from cows grazing this forb has a bitter taste, resin may induce dermatitis.

**Forage Value:** worthless to livestock and wildlife, generally unpalatable, cattle may graze it in early spring and late summer.

**Habitat:** prairies, barrens, hills, pastures, and roadsides.

\*\*sited from *North American Range Plants*, Fifth Edition, Stubbendieck, Hatch, Butterfield.\*\*

### **FREE WILDLIFE ESCAPE RAMPS FOR STOCK WATER TANKS**

Please contact the Powder River Conservation District at 738-2321 or 350 Nolan Avenue, Kaycee, WY if you are interested in placing Wildlife Escape Ramps in your stock tanks. Currently we only have fiberglass escape ramps available but hope to have expanded metal escape ramps available soon.

## PRCD Offers Cost Share Programs

The PRCD has two Cost Share Programs available the first is for large rural projects that make a positive difference on the land. This is a cost share program where the PRCD matches 50% up to \$5000, on a reimbursement basis. Projects will be reviewed by staff, then must be approved by the PRCD board before they are initiated. Some examples of projects that qualify under this program are: Solar pumping units, fencing for implementing rotational grazing systems on pastures, or fencing riparian areas to reduce impacts of livestock grazing.

The second cost share program provides incentive for residents and businesses to conserve soil, water and energy. The program also encourages beautification of the landscape. This program matches 50% up to \$1000, on a reimbursement basis. Some examples of projects that qualify under this program are: planting trees and shrubs, xeriscaping to replace traditional lawns, and installation of efficient drip systems for trees and shrubs.

For more information on these cost share programs or for an application please contact the PRCD office at (307) 738-2321 or stop by the office at 350 Nolan Avenue, Kaycee, WY.

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## Tree Sales

The Powder River Conservation District is now taking orders for trees. Please contact the PRCD as soon as possible if you are interested in ordering trees. Orders are subject to availability. Some trees sell out faster than others.

### Shrubs

- Smokey Saskatoon
- Service Berry
- Red-Osier Dogwood
- Siberian Pea Shrub
- Nanking Cherry
- Chokecherry
- Schurbert Cherry
- Late Lilac
- Common Lilac



### Large Trees

- Sargent Crab
- Quaking Aspen
- Select Canada Red Cherry
- Green Ash
- Patmore Ash
- Prairie Silk' Honey Locust
- Bur Oak
- Japanese Tree Lilac
- Poplar
- Colo. Blue Spruce
- Austrian Pine
- Ponderosa Pine
- Scotch Pine
- Colorado Spruce

### Seedlings

- Chokecherry
  - Plum
  - Sand Cherry
  - Woods Rose
  - Buffaloberry
  - Service berry
  - Wax Current
  - Cottonwood
  - Hackberry
  - Honeylocust
  - Poplar
  - Bur Oak
  - Colo. Blue Spruce
  - Douglas fir
  - Englemann Spruce
  - Ponderosa Pine
  - Austrian Pine
  - Scotch Pine
- Just to Name a few!**

*Powder River Conservation District  
P.O. Box 48  
Kaycee, WY 82639*

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Kaycee, WY  
Permit #1

*Merry  
Christmas*

The word "Merry" is written in a red, cursive font. The word "Christmas" is written in a larger, red, cursive font. Two holly leaves with red berries are positioned between the words: one to the right of "Merry" and one to the left of "Christmas".

The PRCD is an equal opportunity employer.

Find us on the web: [www.powderrivercd.org](http://www.powderrivercd.org)