

March 2012

Powder River News

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Districts Work Together to Provide a Range and Wildlife Specialist for Johnson County

The Powder River Conservation District and the Lake DeSmet Conservation District would like to introduce their new Range and Wildlife specialist Reese Irvine. Reese grew up in Lander, WY where he was heavily involved in 4-H and FFA. He attended Laramie County Community College where he studied Ag Production and Ag Economics. Reese then transferred to the University of Wyoming and received his Bachelors of Science in Range Management with minors in Reclamation as well as Farm and Ranch Management. Prior to moving to Buffalo, Reese spent three years as a Range Technician for Grand Teton National Park. His new position is a cooperative effort between the two Districts, multiple agencies and non-profit organizations to help administer NRCS programs and funds through the Sage Grouse Initiative. Reese has strong ties to agriculture through family and friends. He enjoys hunting and fishing as well as leather work and saddle making. Reese is excited for his new position and to work with area producers to improve sage grouse habitat through healthy rangelands. Reese can be contacted in the Buffalo office at 684-2526 ext. 118



March 2012

PRCD Offering Cost Share Programs

The PRCD is offering two Cost Share Programs: 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.



Tree Sales



The Powder River Conservation District is taking orders for trees.

Tree orders will be accepted until Friday, March 30, 2012. The PRCD has available large stock trees, shrubs, fruit trees, and seedling trees. A full list of trees can be obtained from the PRCD. Orders are subject to availability as some types of trees sell out faster than others.

In order to purchase seedling trees you must own at least 2 acres of land. They come in bundles of 25 or 30 each.

Please contact the PRCD as soon as possible if you are interested in ordering trees.

Water Quality Facts of the Powder River Watershed

Selenium, a metal that is found natural in our earth's surface is essential for all life in small amounts. However, if excessive quantities are consumed it can be toxic and can cause reduced reproductive performance and blind staggers in animals. In humans consuming excessive quantities of Selenium for over a long period of time could lead to hair or fingernail loss, numbness in fingers and toes, or problems with circulation.

Selenium Concentrations by Stream for the sampling period of January 2010 to October 2011:

The sampling site on the South Fork of Powder River saw selenium concentrations ranging from below the detection limit of 5 µg/L to 37µg/L. The highest total selenium concentration was measured in May 2011. There are two sampling sites on Murphy Creek. The first site is located near the Murphy Creek Bridge on the TTT Rd. This site saw concentrations varying from below the detection limit to 20 µg/L. The other site located near the Murphy Creek Bridge on Old US Highway 87 had concentrations that were below the detection limit in approximately 23 % of the samples collected. A maximum total selenium concentration of 23 µg/L was measure in September of 2010. The Willow Creek site measured below the total selenium detection limit in approximately half of the 22 samples collected. The highest concentration of 10 µg/L was measure in May of 2010. Overall, selenium concentrations continue to frequently exceed the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) water quality standard of 5 µg/L. Similar to previous results, there are no apparent correlations between selenium and field parameters and additional water quality constituents.

Murphy Creek Use Attainability Analysis (UAA) Update

The PRCD completed an assessment of the Murphy Creek watershed in 2009 and found that the selenium in this watershed is naturally occurring and not attributable to human activities. Following this assessment the District submitted a UAA Petition to the WDEQ requesting site specific selenium criteria on Murphy Creek in June of 2010. The WDEQ reviewed the petition and requested additional information on the bentonite mines and oil wells in the watershed, livestock grazing impacts, and additional water quality analysis. In addition, the WDEQ toured the watershed in June 2011 and concurred with the preliminary findings. The most recent conversation with the WDEQ (January 2012) indicated that the EPA is in the process of reviewing the petition and developing site specific selenium criteria for Murphy Creek.

Arsenic in the Powder River Watershed

In January 2012, the WDEQ published the Draft 2012 Integrated 305(b) and 303(d) Report. The report indicated that arsenic concentrations in the Powder River exceeded the total arsenic criterion protection of drinking water use between the USGS sampling site near Sussex downstream to the Arvada USGS gauging station. Based on these results the Powder River from the confluence with Salt Creek downstream to the confluence with Soldier Creek was added to the 303(d) list of impairments.

The WDEQ surface water quality drinking standard for arsenic in water sources with a drinking water use is 10 µg/L. In 2009 the USGS gauging station at Sussex measure an arsenic concentration of 270 µg/L. Although the source of the arsenic is unknown, the WDEQ indicated that Salt Creek is a big contributor.

Arsenic is a naturally occurring trace element found in the Earth's crust and can be released into the environment through natural or human activities. Arsenic is a health concern because it can cause thickening and discoloration of the skin, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea; numbness in hands and feet; partial paralysis; and blindness. Arsenic has also been linked to several types of cancer including bladder, lung, skin, kidney, liver, and prostate.

PLANT FACTS

Common Name: Serviceberry (juneberry)

Species: *Amelanchier alnifolia*

Life Span: Perennial

Origin: Native

Season: Cool

Growth Form: Shrub or small tree (to 6 m tall); trunks single or clustered with branches near the base; flowers April to June, fruit matures in July and August, reproduces from seeds and stolons, forming colonies.



Vegetative Characteristics:

Leaves: alternate, simple, blades oval or oblong, teeth often only above the middle, main lateral veins entering the teeth.

Stems: young twigs silky-pubescent, becoming glabrate or glabrous and reddish-brown to grayish, rigid.

Floral and Fruit Characteristics:

Inflorescences: racemes; widely ovate, erect

Flowers: perfect, regular, white

Fruits: berry-like pomes, fleshy, reddish to purplish-black, 3-to-6 seeded

Other: flowers are ill-scented.

Historic, Food and Medicinal Uses: fresh fruit is dry, mealy, and not very palatable; fruit can be used to make jams, pies, and wines; American Indians used stems for arrow shafts and tepee stakes.

Livestock Losses: none

Forage Value: young growth is fair to good for livestock, excellent browse for deer and moos; fruit is an important food for chipmunks, squirrels, black bears, and birds; bark is eaten by beavers and marmots.

Habitat: brushy hillsides, open woods, canyons, and creek banks.

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

Rain Barrel Sales

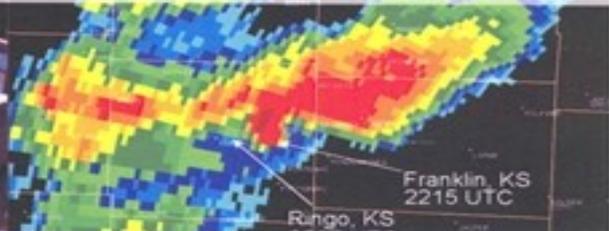
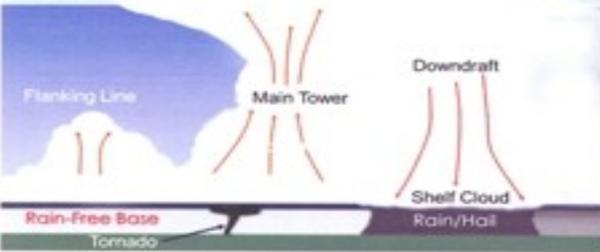


Have you ever considered using a rain barrel to water your garden? The Powder River Conservation District may be able to help. Using a rain barrel is a great way to store water from rain and snow events. The water can then be used to water plants and gardens. It also benefits water quality by reducing the amount of run-off, which picks up pollutants on the ground and carries them to streams. The PRCD has begun to sell rain barrels at the significantly reduced price of \$55 per barrel. Order forms are available at the PRCD office.

If you have an interest in using rain barrels please contact the District at 738-2321 or by email at anita.bartlett@wy.nacdnet.net

March 2012

 **Spotter & CoCoRaHS Training**
2:00 - 5:00 PM, Tuesday, April 17th, 2012
Harold Jarrard Park Meeting Room - Kaycee
For more information visit weather.gov/riverton

What is the NWS? 	Why are spotters important? 
How do I "speak" weather? 	How does weather work? 
What/How should I report? 	How do I stay safe? 

FREE WILDLIFE ESCAPE RAMPS FOR STOCK WATER TANKS

WE HAVE TWO TYPES OF RAMPS AVAILABLE: EXPANDED METAL AND FIBERGLASS. PLEASE CONTACT US AT 738-2321 IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PLACING THE RAMPS IN YOUR STOCK TANKS.

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

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

Mark Your
Calendars!!!

PRCD Board Meeting– Thursday, April 12, 2012 @ 6:30 pm

CoCoRaHS/Severe Weather Training-April 17, 2012 @ 2pm—HJP



The PRCD is an equal opportunity employer.

Find us on the web: www.powderrivercd.org