

NEWSLETTER

LARAMIE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Water News

LCCD & City of Cheyenne Work Together in Water Conservation

In the second quarter of 2026, Jeff Geyer, Water Program Specialist, and the summer work team, finished a project in conjunction with the City of Cheyenne on Belvoir/Mariah Ranch west of town. The projects that were completed were a fishing pond, stocked with trout, fencing a riparian pasture to protect it from grazing, and the installation of a stock tank and pipeline for livestock water.

The project benefits the community by helping maintain the natural beauty of the ranch and preserve the natural resources within the property. The trails are now open to the public and can be found at: <https://www.cheyennecity.org/Your-Government/Departments/Public-Works/Belvoir-Ranch>



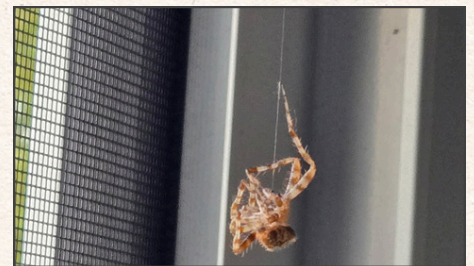
Quote of the Quarter

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

- Aldo Leopold

Picture of the Quarter

This picture was taken by Erin Friel, LCCD Finance Coordinator. While not a fan of spiders (this is an Orb Weaver), she relocated it away from her front door for it to eat more flies and misquitos another day!



All the Socials



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Blanket Flower

Native Praire Island Program

Like Spring, It's BACK! The NPIP program is co-sponsored by the Cheyenne-High Plains Audubon Society. The program ran for several years, with varying results. The LCCD Resource Specialist is working on rebuilding this popular program with a few new parameters. In conjunction with providing the seed, LCCD will:

- Monitor the planting 3 weeks and 3 months post seeding
- Monitor the planting during seasonal changes
- Provide technical assistance throughout the planting and future success of the site

If you are interested in being part of this program, please contact either the Resource Specialist to be put on the wait list!

Did you know?

Often, we hear community members talk about their frustration that the wildflower seeds they planted did not grow or bloom. There are a lot of reasons this might happen, but one reason is the need for seed stratification. This means a wildflower seed needs a certain amount of time at a certain cold temperature to grow. A good example of this is a common Laramie County wildflower, Yarrow. They need a period of 2-4 weeks in temperatures between 34°F and 40°F, and then need light to germinate, which means you don't bury the seed. You leave it on top of the soil with good seed-soil contact. Happy wildflower growing!



Common Yarrow

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Soil Program

The conservation district has the necessary tools to perform basic soil health assessments through a site visit to help diagnose and discuss certain soil problems. This program works in two different ways. The first is to have a site visit with a soil scientist to run an assessment and provide information tailored to your specific soil needs. The second is to assist in soil health testing by providing cost share on all soil health testing. This program is designed to increase overall understanding of soil health and to provide soil results that work towards conservation.

- Site visit to discuss current soil health conditions on the property, and dig a hole alongside landowner to gain a better understanding of their own soil
- Provide on site texture, salt test, pH test, and overview of soil structure
- Assist in soil testing, starting with collection of soil to send out to local laboratory and ending in a review of the soil test results
- Cost share (50%) of the total cost of soil testing

Did you know?

When you look at fertilizer, they will show you the “N-P-K” in the mix. What does that mean? Let’s go back to Chemistry! N is the element of Nitrogen, a necessary element for all things green and growing. P is Phosphorus, which helps for blooms and roots. K, is for potassium and acts as an overall health support for the plant.

While there are many other “macro and micronutrients” that are necessary for plant growth (sulfur, manganese, and Iron, for example), N-P-K are the building blocks for healthy soil and healthy plants!

Nitrogen Phosphorous Potassium

19-8-10	
GUARANTEED ANALYSIS	
Total Nitrogen (N)	19.00%
2.5% Ammoniacal Nitrogen	
16.5% Urea Nitrogen	
Available Phosphate (P ₂ O ₅)	8.00%
Soluble Potash (K ₂ O)	10.00%
Sulfur (S)	1.00%
1.00% Combined Sulfur (S)	
Boron (B)	0.02%

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Outreach

Thank you to all who came out to visit us at Albin Day, Pine Bluff Trail Days and the Laramie County Fair! It was wonderful visiting with you all and learning more about the fine citizens of our county. Between the three events in July and August we spoke with over 530 of our freinds in the county! If you didn't catch us at the fair, we had MICROSCOPES out, looking at sedimentary rocks, soil, leaves, and seeds. Can you think of anything you might have wanted to see? Let me know!



Volunteer Monica talking about introduced species.

Education

It's that time of year again...school has started! Teachers and homeschool parents, are you looking for something that will convey your required standards, without being the usual lesson plans and lectures? FEAR NOT! The LCCD has a new Education Program that incorporates Wyoming Education Content & Performance Standards and we are here to bring it to you or you can come to us. Call 307-772-2602 or visit our Outreach & Education Page on LCCDnet.org!

Volunteer Opportunities

We are building our Volunteer Program! Need hours for school? Looking for special projects? Interested in Conservation? Call us at 307-772-2602 and talk with us about opportunities we are currently building!

Can you guess what wildflower this is?



Globeamallow
Sphaeralcea coccinea or Scarlet

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Range & Wildlife

John Watson, our Range & Wildlife Specialist is working on a new project that is helping our water sources and wildlife, while helping to replenish an old wetland. He is currently working on a fencing project at Belvoir Ranch, which is owned by the City of Cheyenne, that will keep cattle out of natural springs, while rehabilitating an existing stock tank. According to John, this will allow the areas around the naturally fed springs to revegetate, alleviate erosion, and allow restoration of the natural processes. This program also helps wildlife with a source of clean drinking water as the fences are wildlife friendly.

The history of this area includes ranching on native prairie/pasture land. The areas around the spring are suspected to have been a wetland area which no longer works. Wetland areas are areas that have hydric soil, hydric plants, and hydrology (water). The water exists but there is further investigation happening by our Resource Specialist to see if the Hydric soil exists. If it does, there is a good chance that the wetland can be restored.



Did you know?

Our most frequent, large game animal in Laramie County is the Pronghorn Antelope. They move via routes dictated by generations of maternal teaching.

Pronghorn, unlike deer, prefer to climb under fencing. When faced with fencing they are forced to jump, they alter their course which in turn alters the generational understanding of routes.

Wildlife friendly fencing is a great option for new landowners in Laramie County. When installing fences, think about barbed wire or even smooth wire fences that have a wider opening at the bottom. Avoid putting up cattle or goat panel around large portions of your property, which inhibit natural movement of wildlife.

If you have questions about wildlife friendly fencing, contact John at LCCDWildlife@lccdnet.org.



LARAMIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Wildlife Habitat Island Program (WHIP)

This is a relatively new program that aims to establish small islands of native shrub species across Laramie County. We recommend these native “islands” be planted with existing windbreaks to generate more plant diversity, provide food sources, and enhance wildlife habitat and corridors throughout the county. This program helps provide insight to what grows best in our area and help landowners make sound plant selection decisions in the future.



Mountain Mahogany

LCCD Will Provide:

- Design of the habitat island and plant selection
- Monitoring of the site over 1-2 growing periods to determine the success of the plantings
- Landowners are to be responsible for watering to ensure establishment of this program

The Shrubs of WHIP

I would like to introduce you to the shrubs of WHIP!

- Mountain Mahogany
- Serviceberry
- Antelope Bitterbrush
- Big Sagebrush
- Snowberry
- Rabbitbrush
- Sumac
- Sand Cherry
- 4-Wing Saltbush
- Chokecherry
- Buffaloberry
- Golden Currant

Surprisingly, a lot of these shrubs are edible to humans as well! For example the Serviceberry, is a native shrub/tree that produces fruit that tastes remarkably like blueberries and cherries combined! It's a great addition to both your wildlife habitat and your yard!



LARAMIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Trees

Interested in Seedling Trees? The first question to ask is are you going to plant them or do you want to have the District plant them? **If you are interested in having the District put in a Tree Row, contact Chris Vercelli, the Tree Program Coordinator, before buying trees.** If you are planting them yourself, read on!

Tree ordering will START January 4, 2027 for the spring season and will end when we run out of trees!

This is an opportunity to get seedlings that do not need to be staked like more mature trees, and will establish a strong root system to hold itself up in our wild Wyoming wind.

This is the process:

1. Jump online to LCCDNET.ORG starting 4 January.
2. Go to SHOP and click on seedling trees. These are the trees that we will be selling both for conservation plantings and for anyone who wants to order seedlings.
3. Choose what you want, the quantities you want (remember, **seedlings come in BUNDLES OF 25!**), and then go to check out. You can only use a credit card for the website.
4. These trees go FAST! It is highly recommended that you purchase them as soon as ordering starts so you can get your desired species. Because they go fast, checks are not encouraged.



Congratuations!

Chris Vercelli, formally our LCCD Technican, was named the new Tree Program Coordinator for Laramie County Conservation District! He is working on his Arborist's License and continues to be a valuabale asset to our programs!

LARAMIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Water

The City of Cheyenne acquired a 543-acre parcel referred to as the Mariah Ranch a few years ago, expanding the boundary of its existing 20,000-acre Belvoir Ranch. When the District found out the Mariah had been purchased by the city, plans immediately started on implementing a large-scale project that would create numerous uses on Belvoir. “We wanted to restore the badly dilapidated stock reservoir as a trophy trout fishery, establish a riparian pasture for wildlife use, and provide stock water on the drier uplands for better distribution within the pasture” according to Jeff Geyer, Water Specialist. This was going to require money, and lots of it. Rebuilding a dam alone can be hundreds of thousands of dollars, not to mention the cost of a solar powered half-mile pipeline and tanks.

Meta Platforms, Inc. was the first and largest contributor to the project starting in December 2023. Next, the Cheyenne Women’s Civic League purchased the installation of the entire fence that protected the riparian pasture with their \$5000 check. The Curt Gowdy Chapter of Trout Unlimited contributed \$20,000 towards the engineering and construction of the reservoir. Water for Wildlife backed us with \$10,000 for construction of the pipeline and reservoir and Wyoming Water Development helped finish the project with their program funding. With these partners, your Laramie County Conservation District was able to complete the facilities by October 2025 for under \$450,000. The WGFD upheld their end of the bargain by stocking the pond with both rainbow and brown trout fingerlings this spring.

Even though precipitation for this year hasn’t been great, the pond managed to fill to its new capacity. The pond was dredged to reclaim its inactive capacity, while the outlet works, and dam were completely reconstructed. Aquatic vegetation has taken off well and will be the driver of pond production – those fingerlings need to eat to grow. Give it a couple of years and it should provide an exciting fishery for those willing to walk a little over a mile down to the pond on the city’s new trail system. Ducks and geese were making use of it and its nearby nesting grounds this spring. Wildlife are taking advantage of the riparian pasture as well as the reservoir and stock tanks. The Mariah Project is a great example of what can happen when public-private partnerships form for the benefit of multiple use on publicly accessible lands. The primary beneficiary is you, the residents of Laramie County. Take some time to explore the area before the snow flies.



LARAMIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

We Are LCCD

Working to Protect Soil, Water, &
Wildlife since 1988

Our Mission

Providing Laramie County citizens sustainable natural resources to protect and promote the health, welfare and safety of Laramie County residents.

Our Vision

Balancing Laramie County's growth while maintaining the historical short-grass, high-plains prairie, protecting the natural diversity of Laramie County now and for generations to come.

LCCD Board

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Chair
- ◆ **Casey Epler**
Vice Chair
- ◆ **Scott Cherek**
Secretary
- ◆ **Ann Sanchez**
Treasurer
- ◆ **Jay Berry**
Rural Representative

LCCD Staff

- ◆ **Vacant**
Manager
- ◆ **Erin Friel**
Finance Coordinator
- ◆ **Chris Vercelli**
LCCD Technician
- ◆ **Jeff Geyer**
Water Specialist
- ◆ **John Watson**
Range/Wildlife Specialist
- ◆ **Rachel Crowther**
Resource Specialist
- ◆ **Jacki Bakker**
Outreach Coordinator

LARAMIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Why Conservation?

"We generally share that what's good for birds is good for people. Landowners are the stewards of the land, and we want to make sure we're bringing new science, new information to the ways landowners manage their property..."

— Kristal Stoner (Executive Director, Audubon Great Plains)

Laramie County Conservation District
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