

High County Conservation



2016

LARAMIE RIVERS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Summer Edition



LRCO Cost Share Program and Public Benefit by Tony Hoch

With tight budgets at every level, there has been much talk in the conservation district world about public benefit in the use of public funds. Our organization was born in the mid -1940s out of the dust bowl years when a group of livestock producers along the Big Laramie and Little Laramie Rivers voted to form the Laramie Rivers Conservation District to work with the newly-created Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service or NRCS) to pool personal resources and use public funds to apply practices that would conserve soil and water. These did include, and still include practices like irrigation efficiency for water conservation and no-till farming for soil conservation. The concept of "cost share" ensures that the participant has skin in the game, which is common topic in our board meetings.

Since the 40s conservation district missions have evolved to include improving and enhancing wildlife habitat, conservation education programs to instill a value of stewardship in the public, and living snow fence programs to conserve soil, water, and home heating energy needs. Our board has discussions about public benefit at almost every meeting and we do our best to provide programs and services in areas where they are needed and not covered by businesses or other government entities. A great example of this is the annual seedling tree sale, where we provide inexpensive access to seedling trees that are too small for nurseries to deal with, but can have a great benefit to the land owner and the environment. Our contributions to community plantings and improvement projects can have a real benefit to economic development and the local economy by improving property values, and the education programs we help support instill a sense of stewardship in children and adults who might not ever be exposed to conservation in the natural world.

Supporting Local Producers

In Spring of this year Laura McGinley, LRCO District Clerk, launched a new Facebook group for community members and local producers. Laramie Grown - Online Farmers Market provides an year-round outlet space for the sale of goods, assistance finding resources, and information sharing. In March 2015, The Wyoming Food Freedom Act was signed by Governor Mead with the purpose of allowing for the sale and consumption of homemade foods, and to encourage the expansion of agricultural sales by farmers markets, ranches, farms and home based producers. This removed many of the obstacles small producers had when attempting to sell directly to their community. With a few exceptions, any food may be sold as long as there is only a single transaction between a producer and informed end-consumer. No middleman allowed. The consumer must be informed that the product is not licensed, inspected or regulated. Interested producers should read the statute and what items are still regulated before selling. This and other helpful information can be found on at wyomingfoodfreedom.org. We encourage residents throughout the Albany County community to join Laramie Grown and support neighbors who are ranchers, farmers, and cottage industries who are passionate about what they do and want to share the harvest closer to home.



WATERSHED STUDY OPEN HOUSE - You are invited to learn about the WWDC's Watershed Study process. The project's principal objective is to provide a comprehensive watershed management plan to benefit water users within the study area. The program will ultimately provide funding eligibility to water users to improve existing facilities or develop new sources of water. Potential projects which can be funded include irrigation infrastructure rehabilitation, water storage facilities, livestock / wildlife water supplies, etc. **JUNE 22, 2016 4pm - 8pm at 5015 Stone Rd. - Laramie**

Backyard Conservation: Beneficial Bats by NRCS News

Do mosquitoes bother you? Do you hate using insect repellants and aerosol foggers? Have you found that bug zapper to be somewhat less than effective--and a real annoyance? Maybe it is time to consider a bat colony! While myths have turned these fuzzy creatures into monsters, bats really are important, useful members of the ecosystem.

Interesting facts

- In the United States and Canada there are no vampire bats. While some bats carry rabies, the number of carriers is far lower than in many other wild animals such as raccoons. Besides, rabies kill bats quickly so they rarely show the aggressiveness seen in rabid dogs or cats. Even the less than half of one percent of bats that carry rabies normally bite only in self-defense and pose little threat to people who do not handle them.
- A colony of 150 big brown bats can protect local farmers from up to 33 million or more rootworms each summer. The 20 million Mexican free-tails from Bracken Cave, Texas, eat approximately 200 tons of insects nightly. Best of all, a single little brown bat can catch more than 1,200 mosquitoes-sized insects in one hour!
- Loss of natural roosts--such as tree cavities or caves--has impacted our most common species of bats. Providing an alternate roost can encourage bats to your yard and keep them from seeking shelter in attics.

Suggestions for providing shelter



- ◆ Bat houses can be purchased or you can make your own. Books containing plans can be purchased at many bookstores or you can visit the [Bat Conservation International, Inc.](http://www.batconservation.org) website for criteria for successful bat houses and answers to frequently asked bat house questions.

- ◆ The best-designed houses are 24 to 36 inches tall, 16 to 24 inches wide, and 4 to 5 inches deep. Most houses have 1 to 4 (three-quarter inch wide) roosting chambers. Rough lumber allows bats to cling more easily.

- ◆ Houses should be placed at least 10 feet above the ground, 15 to 20 feet is better. Houses placed on poles or on buildings are preferable to those hung on trees.

- ◆ Bat houses mounted on poles or sides of buildings provide the best protection against predators. Try to locate the house 20 to 25 feet from the nearest tree. Using three-quarter inch roosting spaces helps limit colonization by wasps.

- ◆ Houses should be placed so they receive at least 6 hours of sun a day (more in northern climates), but are protected from bright lights at night.

- ◆ Greatest success will be in areas where water is within a quarter of a mile and there is diverse habitat, including natural vegetation.

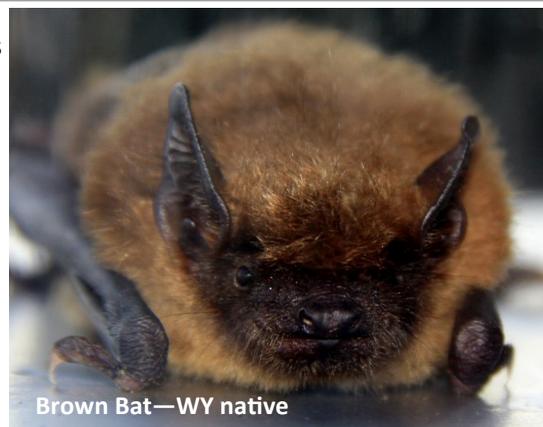
- ◆ Bat houses will be most successfully colonized the first year if they are installed before migrating bats return in the spring.

Caution

- ◆ As with all wildlife, bats should not be handled. If a bat is close enough to pick up, it may be sick and should be left alone. You should not attract bats to places where curious children may try to handle them.

- ◆ While fear of bats persists in the United States, the Chinese consider bats a symbol of good luck and some Native American cultures considered them powerful deities. Given a chance, bats can be a fascinating and beneficial addition to the wildlife in your neighborhood as they swoop around at dusk devouring annoying insect pests.

[Source: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ar/home/?cid=nrcs143_023600]



Brown Bat—WY native



Hoary Bat— WY summer visitor bat conservation international
www.batcon.org



Silver-haired Bat—WY Summer visitor





Repurposing

may not be for everyone but for those with the time, a few tools, and some ingenuity, old items can take on a new life. Benefits of repurposing are, keeping items out of the landfill that still have some usefulness left in them, conserving natural resources by reusing old materials, and the joy of having an item that is truly unique and in some way, shows off a bit of personality of its maker. Last year LRCD launched the **Laramie ReBuild** group on Facebook. Over the past 18 months community members have posted and found new homes for nearly everything a person could need for a home project including: weathered and remnant wood, light and plumbing fixtures, shower surrounds and bathtubs, furniture with project potential, roofing materials, doors and windows, bathroom and kitchen cabinets, tiles and carpet, tools and appliances, a rainbow array of leftover paint, and much more. The group has also grown into a space where folks are asking basic repair questions, finding services for small repair jobs and yard work, and sharing pictures and tips of their own repurposed endeavors. A popular project that members have shared is converting old dressers (or desks, wooded sewing cabinets, or the like) into bathroom vanities, similar to the two pictured below. So, even if creative ideas are not a strong point, Laramie ReBuild and many other sites on the internet have plenty of project ideas to spark the imagination and keep the DIYer busy throughout the year. Visit us at Laramie ReBuild on Facebook! Share your own projects, help others find resources and information, and of course list items you have laying around but have no use for or buy items you can use. Hope to see you there.



National Weather Service Monthly Precip (inches)															
Laramie Regional Airport - Preliminary Data															
Source: http://www.weather.gov/climate/index.php?wfo=cys															
Month	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
January	0.06	0.04	0.13	0.30	0.03	0.13	0.05	0.31	0.14	0.38	0.16	0.15	0.68	0.12	0.31
February	0.07	0.25	0.10	0.20	0.05	0.09	0.16	0.04	0.30	0.49	0.95	0.42	0.51	0.67	0.12
March	0.95	0.95	0.00	0.49	0.21	0.85	0.26	0.06	0.50	0.40	trace	0.34	0.54	0.17	1.94
April	0.23	1.28	1.32	0.81	0.58	0.95	0.38	1.30	2.14	1.96	0.54	0.71	0.80	1.73	2.56
May	0.82	1.73	0.69	1.06	0.86	1.42	3.59	1.36	1.24	1.21	0.21	0.99	2.55	2.71	2.01
June	0.38	0.82	2.86	3.29	0.46	0.33	1.81	2.36	2.29	1.36	0.24	0.44	0.76	0.77	
July	0.50	1.11	1.07	0.97	1.57	2.20	0.58	2.30	0.78	1.17	1.48	1.89	3.32	2.39	
August	1.47	0.78	1.77	0.70	1.40	1.74	1.56	1.03	1.16	0.65	0.34	2.34	1.63	1.30	
September	0.58	0.76	3.03	0.43	1.25	1.51	1.19	0.90	0.06	0.89	0.47	3.05	2.07	0.34	
October	0.75	0.46	0.62	1.05	0.61	1.42	0.18	0.96	1.49	1.31	1.01	2.08	0.30	2.05	
November	0.06	0.59	0.22	0.71	0.06	0.07	0.24	0.38	1.46	0.41	0.16	0.46	0.54	0.42	
December	0.07	0.42	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.35	0.20	0.72	0.76	0.06	0.42	0.1	0.14	0.55	
Total:	5.94	9.19	11.9	10.07	7.17	11.06	10.20	11.72	12.32	10.29	5.98	12.97	13.84	13.22	6.94

**LARAMIE RIVERS
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**
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NON-PROFIT ORG
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LARAMIE, WY
82070

District Staff

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Director

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Martin Curry
Resource Specialist/
Bookkeeper

Laura McGinley
District Clerk
Communications /Publications



KIDS IN THE GARDEN LEARNING and GROWING

Join this group and learn how to grow a great vegetable garden in Laramie! You will be actively involved in preparing the soil, planting, nurturing and harvesting.

Location: Kid's Garden at LaBonte Park
(Between 8th & 9th on Shields Street)

Date: June 16th - August 11t

Time: 9:00 AM - 10:30 PM

Ages: 6-16 (Parents Welcomed!)

Cost: Free

Bring: Sunscreen, water, hat & old closed toed shoes

If there are a large number of participants, we will offer a second class on a different day of the week.
Waivers will be signed the first day of class.