

# PRONGHORN



## Garden for Wildlife

"Pollinators in, deer out" – is the theme of Garden for Wildlife, a new program by the Wyoming Wildlife Federation (WWF), geared toward Wyoming gardeners. From backyard gardens to large scale landscapes, anyone can have a garden with wildlife in mind.

"This program offers residents a great way to participant in wildlife conservation," says Dot Newton, WWF outreach coordinator. WWF has partnered with Halladay Surbaru in Cheyenne to encourage gardeners to "take the pledge" and manage their garden for wildlife. Participants can certify their garden online as well as access gardening tips and resources, at <http://wyomingwildlife.org/education/wildlife-habitat/>.



Send us a photo of you in front of a public lands sign (BLM, National Forest, National Wildlife Refuge) and we will add you to our Facebook page for "keeping public lands public!" Email [info@wyomingwildlife.org](mailto:info@wyomingwildlife.org)

## The Buffalo Return Project – A Restoration of History

*By Chamois L. Andersen, Executive Director*

**T**he Great Plains is where the American Indian and the bison once shared the same land. This symbolic relationship could once again prosper with a new determination to return the buffalo back to its historic range and tribal lands in Wyoming. In Shoshone, "Boyzshan Bid-en" or "The Buffalo Return" could also signify our remorsefulness for a historical past that included the destruction of this iconic species and for our Native Americans.

The Wyoming Wildlife Federation in collaboration with the National Wildlife Federation are working with the Eastern Shoshone Tribe of the Wind River Reservation on this important restoration project. A total of 25 bison – genetically reputable and certified disease free – will be reintroduced to the Wind River Range this fall.

Bringing back the buffalo – a species that once flourished and unified the Plains Indians – could also help mend relations

*(Continued on page 4)*



Photo courtesy of Stephen C. Torbit



Photo courtesy Justin Briggs

## Watchable Wildlife Tour & Wine Event!

WWF, Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the Bighorn Audubon Society have teamed up for a watchable wildlife tour on Saturday, August 27 in Sheridan.

**Field Day:** Amsden Creek Wildlife Habitat Management Area and Tongue River Canyon, near Dayton. G&F and WWF experts will be on hand to discuss the species that inhabit the area as well as the importance of succulent forage for big game animals. *Bring your binoculars!* Representatives of the Bighorn Audubon Society will provide us with some birding opportunities. Meet us at 9 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 27 at the Tongue River Valley Community Center in Dayton (1100 US Hwy 14).

**Wine Event:** Weston Wineries has created a special vintage and wine label for this WWF fundraising event, which will include speakers, a silent auction and live music. The party starts at 5:30 p.m., Weston Wineries, 201 Broadway St., Sheridan.

## Dennis Jespersen Memorial scholarship recipients



Chamois Andersen and UW Professor Frank Rahal.

They received \$575 toward their aquatics research for the Department of Zoology and Physiology. Dennis Jespersen was a fisheries biologist who died in an avalanche on Medicine Bow peak in the Snowy Range. This fund was created in his honor and intended for students to conduct cutthroat trout-related research. Ciepiela's research is focused on determining the stream of origin and movement patterns of salmonids in the Upper North Platte River basin using otolith microchemistry. LeCheminant's research is on movement dynamics and survival of hatchery-reared Colorado River cutthroat trout post stocking.

University of Wyoming graduate students Lindsey Ciepiela and Alexander George LeCheminant are the 2016 award recipients of the Dennis Jespersen Memorial scholarship, presented by WWF Executive Director

## Red Desert to Hoback (RD2H) Mule Deer Migration Initiative

By Steve Kilpatrick



Photo courtesy of Joe Rills

Wyoming's migration routes are critical to the health and survival of our mule deer herds. Research under the Wyoming Migration Initiative (WMI) utilized state-of-the-art GPS technology to piece together the entire Red Desert to Hoback (RD2H) migration corridor. This route allows mule deer to move from their winter

to their summer range near Hoback Basin, south of Jackson.

Scientists discovered the migration route, which spans 150 miles, is the longest in the lower 48 states. One of the conservation priorities that has come out of this research is the importance of wildlife-friendly fencing along the corridor. Private landowners are key in this effort.

**"This outreach effort is not only for working with landowners on wildlife fencing but to gain their knowledge about the animals and habitat considerations on their lands, which is really important to conserving this corridor," says Smith**

Addressing fencing along private lands within this migration corridor is an important priority of WWF and the RD2H conservation Partnership, which is composed of 14 nonprofits and academia.

To help facilitate this effort, the Partnership has proposed a new position that will focus on coordinating the on-the-ground fencing work as well as help guide an outreach program to better carry out the conservation priorities. This latest effort will include working with private landowners to modify or replace approximately 130 miles of existing fence. A master fencing inventory and map (thanks to the work of The Nature Conservancy) includes priority locations for the new fencing. WWF with the Partnership has successfully secured over \$314,000 in grant funding for the fencing needed along the RD2H route. These funds were generated from competitive grants through the Pinedale Anticline Project Office (PAPO), Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, and the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative. One of three fence segments has been completed on the Rolling Thunder and modifications will be initiated on the Teton Diablo. For information on the Partnership, log on to [www.rd2h.org](http://www.rd2h.org).



## From the Field

Joy Bannon, WWF Field Director

### Greater Little Mountain Coalition Washington, D.C. Fly-In!



Chris Steffen, Green River Chief of Police, Tasha Sorensen, Trout Unlimited, Sen. John Barrasso, Joy Bannon, WWF, and Wally Johnson, Sweetwater County Commission.

### Rock Springs Resource Management Plan

Much of our conservation advocacy work for 3.6 million acres in southwest Wyoming is conducted here in Wyoming. This involves communicating and working toward management solutions with local and state agency personnel, elected officials, sportsmen and sportswomen, wildlife watchers, non-profit organizations, and neighboring communities. These large-scale management plan revisions also involve working with federal leadership in Washington, D.C. This month a handful of Greater Little Mountain Coalition representatives traveled to D.C. to meet with our delegation (Senators Enzi and Barrasso and Rep. Lummis) as well as agency members (Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Department of Interior and CEQ). We discussed resource plans as well as the importance of our public lands. Those included in the D.C. fly-in were Sweetwater County Commission Chairman Wally Johnson, Green River Chief of Police and Muley Fanatic Foundation volunteer Chris Steffen, Tasha Sorensen of Trout Unlimited, and Bannon.

### Greater sage-grouse

While at the nation's capital, Field Director Joy Bannon met with Deputy Assistant Secretary Jim Lyons of the U.S. Department of Interior on continued recovery efforts for the Greater sage-grouse. Since last fall, when the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service released their management plans for the bird, Wyoming's Sage Grouse Implementation Team has been focused on how these federal plans will be implemented in Wyoming. Bannon has requested federal land managers provide a schedule for the on-the-ground conservation efforts, including expectations and priorities.



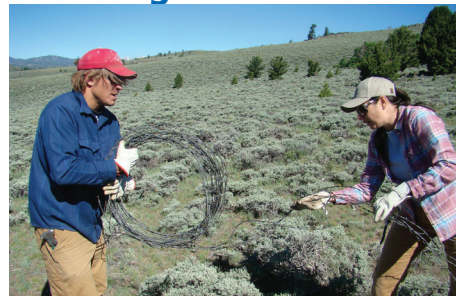
### Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)

Also while in D.C., members of the Greater Little Mountain Coalition met with CEQ regarding the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan, GLMA, and Master Leasing Plans. CEQ is a division of the Executive Office of the President that coordinates federal environmental efforts. The Coalition asked for the support of the CEQ and acknowledged the positive relationship the Coalition has with the local and state BLM offices.

### Wyoming Range

Associate Deputy Chief Brian Ferebee of the National Forest Service received an in-person thank you from WWF, Trout Unlimited, Muley Fanatic Foundation, and the Sportsmen for the Wyoming Range, for their April 8th recommendation not to lease 39,490 acres within the Wyoming Range of the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

### Volunteer Field Days – Fencing for Wildlife!



WWF President Shane Cross and Field Director Joy Bannon coiling old fencing.

In June, WWF held the 8th annual Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project in Fremont County, which resulted in 35 volunteers who cut, rolled and tied more than

2 miles of old barbed-wire fence in the Shoshone National Forest on South Pass, near Atlantic City, Wyo. Partners for this project included the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Red Canyon Riverton chapters, Lander Art Center, and Bowhunters of Wyoming, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and the Shoshone National Forest.

In May, members of WWF also volunteered for a Fence Removal Day in Albany County. More than 40 volunteers came out for the day to help remove the fourth wire along several miles of fencing so deer and elk can more easily jump over the fence. Elk calves were particularly vulnerable as many were observed getting caught in the fencing. This project was in collaboration with the Wyoming Conservation Corps, USFWS, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and UW's student chapter of the Wildlife Society.

## Buffalo Return Project, continued from page 1

with the tribes on the Wind River Reservation. The timing is apropos. In May, President Obama signed the National Bison Legacy Act into law, officially making the American bison the national mammal of the United States.

The Shoshone, led by Jason Baldes, are championing this project for ecosystem health and cultural reasons. Baldes says, "Bringing back the buffalo is important to our grassland ecosystem and to our cultural heritage." Baldes has degrees in land resources and environmental science from Montana State University, and as a member of the Shoshone tribe he has made it his personal goal to bring back the buffalo for the benefit of not only his people but for all Americans.

In the 1500s, more than 30 million bison inhabited North America. By the late 19th century, less than 1,000 could be found on the continent, with only a handful of wild bison left in the American West. In the early 1900s, fewer than 100 remained in the wild. Bison were killed for food and their hides. After the Civil War, mass herds were killed to make way for the pioneers and settlers of the Great Plains, and to help support trade in both North America and Europe. Army commanders who operated in the West often attempted to drive the Native Americans off of desired lands by killing the buffalo as a way to deprive them of their supplies.

By October 2016, through Boy-zshan Bid-en, the buffalo will have been initially released on an enclosed small parcel, and soon after will have access to 300 acres – prime bison habitat – located on the Wind River Reservation. The setting of this release – a coming home of sorts for the buffalo – is itself iconic. You can see for miles rolling prairie and grassland, the occasional narrow river or stream, and the snow-capped peaks of the Wind River Range towering to the west. The buffalo relocation site falls within 2.2 million acres of tribal lands, a landscape



where historically hundreds of thousands of buffalo roamed.

"The idea that the symbiotic relationship between the buffalo and our Native American culture could be preserved with this project is really important with this endeavor," Baldes says. "The buffalo was a gift from the Creator. It provided for tribal people economically, spiritually, culturally, and socially. The buffalo gave the people life. The buffalo is life."

Historically, the American bison played an essential role in shaping the ecology of the Great Plains.

The animals graze heavily on native grasses and disturb the soil with their hooves, allowing many plant and animal species to flourish. The lives of the Native Americans centered on the buffalo's epic migration across the vast plains of North America – from Canada to Mexico, the Pacific Northwest to the Appalachian Mountains. The buffalo served as the lifeline of the Plains Indians. And ever since, Native Americans have had a symbiotic relationship with them, and have always honored the mighty beasts for the many blessings they have provided. The buffalo was used in ceremonies, their hides for tipi covers, and bones for utensils, shields and weapons.

Today, with this project and other small comebacks in wild bison in scattered places, we can take the ecological

steps necessary to bring back buffalo and the landscape that once supported them. "Together, we can do this and re-establish the buffalo and the cultural and historical connections Native Americans have with this iconic species," Baldes says.

### Boy-zshan Bid-en – plans for the future

- Install wildlife-friendly fencing around the existing 300-acre property of bison habitat on the Wind River Reservation
- Release 25 bison to Wind River Reservation
- Conduct outreach and fundraising for this project
- Hire a buffalo manager for the Wind River tribes
- Create an eco-tourism program with a Visitor's Center and bison education tours for the public

For information on Boy-zshan Bid-en, please contact Jason Baldes or Garrit Voggeser with NWF.

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Garrit Voggeser  
National Director, Tribal Partnerships,  
National Wildlife Federation  
voggeser@nwf.org

New Executive Committee members as of July 2016

## Board of Directors

### Shane Cross

Douglas (President)

### Dave Moody

Lander (Treasurer)

### Phoebe Stoner

Jackson (Secretary)

### Bill Alldredge

Thermopolis

### Blake Balzan

Wheatland

### Chuck Butterfield

Alpine

### Brianna Jones

Laramie

### Janet Marschner

Cheyenne

### Richard Oblak

Cheyenne

### Reg Rothwell

Cheyenne

### Siva Sundaesan

Jackson

## Staff/Coordinators

### Chamois Andersen

Executive Director

### Joy Bannon

Field Director

### Steve Kilpatrick

Field Scientist

### Dot Newton

Administration Manager and Outreach Specialist

### Jessi Johnson

Public Lands Coordinator

### Lisa Hillmer

Membership

# Wyoming Public Lands Initiative

By Jessi Johnson, Public Lands Coordinator



The Wyoming Public Lands Initiative (WPLI) is off and running.

This county-led process is intended to culminate in a statewide recommendation for congressional legislation that will include 45 Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) within that Wyoming. Three out of 8 counties that have opted in have begun their stakeholder process: Fremont, Park, and Sublette County. Each committee includes the following representatives: sportsmen, conservation, motorized, non-motorized, energy, agriculture, general public, and a county commissioner.



WWF and the Wyoming Sportsmen Alliance (WYSA) have joined forces for the WPLI in an effort to ensure a sportsman or sportswoman is at the table on every advisory committee. WWF will also provide the sportsmen representatives with a host of resources for the meetings, such as maps showing critical range for deer and elk and hunting access.

The sportsmen representative will focus on promoting protection of wildlife habitat and hunting and fishing access as core values we want to see in the final recommendations.

The WPLI process has all the makings to be a positive effort for public lands in Wyoming as long as the focus is transparent, fair and has balanced input by the stakeholders. UW's Ruckelshaus Institute has offered their services in facilitation.

This process will be long with a lot of data introduced and stakeholders' interests discussed. Facilitation is important to ensure a sound process and a fair outcome. The advisory committees will be examining large amounts of data and complex stakeholder interests. They should be provided with professional assistance to enable the public to feel confident in the outcome. The WPLI is an opportunity for us to band together to protect public lands.

Other news on WPLI: The WWF has partnered with UW's Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department on studies for the economic impacts of hunting and fishing for each participating county.

WWF is also collaborating with the Wyoming Outdoor Council and The Wilderness Society on a GIS website project, which will serve as a clearing-house of information for all the maps that will be discussed and utilized for the WPLI (big game migration routes/map, oil and gas development sites/map, etc.).

The WPLI is an opportunity for us to band together to protect our public lands. The loss of our core values (wildlife, habitat and access) carries with it a much larger consequence than just the dissatisfaction of sportsmen. WWF and its WYSA partners are working to make sure that each county sportsmen seat has all the tools and support they need to make this process a success. Stay up-to-date and involved! You can follow this process on the WWF website and via my blog on WY Public Lands, at <http://wyoming-wildlife.org/category/wpli-blog/>.



P.O. Box 1312 Lander, WY 82520

wyomingwildlife.org

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**Donate now!** Help us work on your behalf to conserve wildlife and maintain our outdoor heritage.

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Donations of \$100 or MORE will  
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