

The ugly duckling...



By Tom Heald

We all know the childhood story of the ugly duckling ridiculed for not being beautiful like the other ducklings but, in fact, grew up to be a gorgeous swan. In some ways, that is how I'm viewing Wyoming this early summer! All the snow and rain we received turned

this great state into one drop-dead gorgeous picture postcard. It's been about 12 years since we've last experienced this awesome power. For those of you new to Wyoming, this has not been a typical spring/summer in recent years (although most of us hope for it).

As land managers, this moisture obviously has a great upside, but there are things to consider as we head toward drier and hotter conditions. As the landscape begins to dry, potential for wildfires increases exponentially. Our article on "Firewising" your property is particularly timely. Remember, a wildfire can race across the land at more than 40 miles an hour leaving very little time to get out of harm's way. This article gives great tips to reduce your exposure to fire.

On another front, Wyoming's mountain forests are being hit with unprecedented numbers of mountain pine beetles and other insects that are severely taking their toll on mature trees. Our forests will probably never look the same in our lifetimes. That is not to say it will be a collapse of

the forest, but the old growth is going away. Our article on cutting firewood is very relevant. No one wants to bring these forest insects home in back of a pickup loaded with firewood only to have these critters ravage your neighborhood trees. Be a selective harvester of firewood.

On the lighter side of things... the Ask Sam question regarding outhouse requirements got us to laughing when we heard the International Space Station toilet was malfunctioning. Who'd of thought it would cost \$1 million to get a toilet back up and running! It makes our Wyoming code requirements look like a walk in the park.

As always, if our articles spark a question or you want follow-up information, please do not hesitate to contact me or the author. It is our mission to help you with your land-management decisions. Enjoy summer!



Plentiful moisture caused wildflowers to erupt across Wyoming.

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