

# Winter is here (and then some)!



*Jennifer Thompson*

Winter can be a time of reflection. In this issue, we devote quite a bit of space to reflect on efforts at our Property Improvement Project sites.

A few years ago, the team selected three properties with issues common in our state. The first property is in stabilized sand dunes infested with cheatgrass. The landowners are also dealing with revegetation of a blowout area and the challenge of landscaping in a very demanding environment.

The second property is a high-elevation location confronted with mountain pine beetle infestation, white pine blister rust, declining aspen stands, fire concerns, a few weed issues, and some serious snow management problems.

The third property is in a slightly warmer area of the state and has the advantage of a shallow water table. Striking progress has been made at this property in rehabilitating an area degraded by overgrazing. The biggest surprise is that it was all accomplished with targeted grazing strategies – no reseeding necessary.

Taking some time to peruse these articles and to check out their accompanying videos online may offer a host of ideas for practical approaches to common problems. In each story you'll also find references to the original *Barnyards & Backyards* magazine article, which gives a thorough introduction to each property – you can find these in past issues of the magazine or online at [barnyardsandbackyards.com](http://barnyardsandbackyards.com).

'Tis the snow and increased wind season, and we have three articles that address these timely topics. **"Snow – A warm winter coat for plants"** gives us a reminder of some of the beneficial aspects of snow we tend to forget (especially around February). **"To plow or not to plow"** may give some food for thought when considering snow management strategies. **"What do I do now that those darned beetles have moved on?"** is a question many are pondering as we look at windbreaks damaged by mountain pine beetles. This article, from someone dealing with the question daily, can offer some insights as you think through whether you want to remove damaged trees and if replacements are needed.

Our featured article this month brings a breath of summer air as it highlights a grower whose bountiful harvests are sold at farmers markets in the Big Horn Basin and beyond.

I hope this winter provides time for reflection on your own rural living goals. We will do our best to provide ideas and inspiration as we greet a brand new year!

**Jennifer Thompson**, the small acreage outreach coordinator, is already at work on the spring edition. She can be reached at (307) 745-3698 or at [jsjones@uwyo.edu](mailto:jsjones@uwyo.edu).



Check out our ever-growing collection of useful video clips on YouTube.