



Winter is a time for planning

It is both an honor and a challenge to take the helm as coordinator of *Barnyards&Backyards: Rural Living in Wyoming* magazine. The honor comes from working with the high-quality people and organizations represented by the Small Acreage Issue Team



Tony Hoch

in Wyoming. The challenge is to sift through all the great ideas for stories that come from the team, resource professionals (or experts) across the state, and our readers, choose the ones best suited for the time of year and most pertinent to the rural Wyoming landowner, and work together to form a coherent package in a given issue.

Winter is a time for planning. In this issue of *Barnyards&Backyards*, we have worked to provide information to help readers hit the ground running with projects when fair weather returns.

If doing any building or excavation this year, the article on planning to reclaim topsoil on and around a construction site warrants careful reading. Life-giving topsoil is a precious commodity in Wyoming and should be treated as such with thoughtful planning before disturbing or compacting it.

Our article on buying the right tractor will get you started if you are finding that chores involving shoveling, digging, and hauling are requiring a little more horsepower these days.

And, our featured landowner article on improving stream habitat might inspire you to talk to the right experts about riparian restoration.

With volatile energy prices, we continually receive questions on alternative energy options for

homes in the country. Small-acreage workshops on green building and off-grid living are breaking attendance records in Wyoming, and we hope this issue's article may help you decide if these options make economic sense in addition to their environmental benefits.

Rounding out this issue are articles on one of our partner organizations (Wyoming's weed and pest control districts), winter pruning, and a photo quiz on conifer tree species.

As always, we are here to serve our target audience – Wyoming small-acreage landowners and managers. Your feedback counts! Please contact me at (307) 721-0072 or tony.hoch@wy.nacdnet.net with questions or suggestions you have regarding this publication or possible stories.

