

# extensionconnection

August 2008

University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service

## In this issue

Ranch practicum draws high praise from participants

UW CES, ranchers, and agencies collaborate to improve 13,000 acres

UW president honors extension educator with Rhonda Jean Shipp Day

4-H program takes off at F.E. Warren Air Force Base

Collegiate 4-H Club active on campus and beyond

Extension service helps nonprofits bolster strengths

Volunteer of year, lifetime volunteer dedicate efforts to 4-H youths

Natrona County 4-H extension educator's ag efforts draw honors

Nutrition, fitness emphasized by educator during course at Wyoming Honor Conservation Camp

## From the director...

Extension has been looking to the future and planning to meet our challenges and take advantage of our opportunities.

— Glen Whipple

Every five years, the university engages itself and its stakeholders in planning. We in cooperative extension are in the midst of developing plans for our future. Much has changed in Wyoming and its communities in the six years since our last planning effort, bringing new challenges and opportunities to serve more effectively.

These opportunities and challenges make it even more important we look into the future and understand where we need to go. The Roman philosopher Seneca observed, “If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable.” Extension has been looking to the future and planning to meet our challenges and take advantage of our opportunities. A draft description of our plans can be found on the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) Web site under the heading “Academic Plan” under the Quick Links section on the right-hand side of the page at <http://ces.uwyo.edu/>. Some of the things we are considering are: a shortening of our name to University of Wyoming Extension; increasing our capabilities in renewable energy education, viz., wind, solar, and biofuels; increasing our assistance to energy-impacted and other rapidly changing communities; and providing educational support for disturbed lands’ reclamation efforts in the state. There are others.

If you have thoughts or input regarding our plans, please direct comments to me at [glen@uwyo.edu](mailto:glen@uwyo.edu), or send me a note at Department 3354, 1000 East University Ave., Laramie, WY 82071. The academic plan will be in review through the summer. I will appreciate your input.

I am delighted at the extension programs highlighted in this issue of *Extension Connection*. The High Plains Ranch Practicum is a collaborative project of Wyoming and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension educators to serve the ranching community in the high plains area of their states. Relying on a combination of military grant and Laramie County UW CES funding, the new military 4-H program on the F.E. Warren Air Force Base reaches out to military youths and brings the best of 4-H to them. The Park County Leadership Institute and UW President Tom Buchanan’s honoring of Rhonda Shipp highlights Rhonda’s successful efforts over many years to help her community build its leadership capability. The Hot Springs County CES office is helping an area landowner develop a long-range management plan to improve habitat for wildlife and livestock. Prescribed burning is the focus of the plan. I hope you enjoy reading about these dedicated educators and volunteers and their efforts to serve their communities as much as I have.

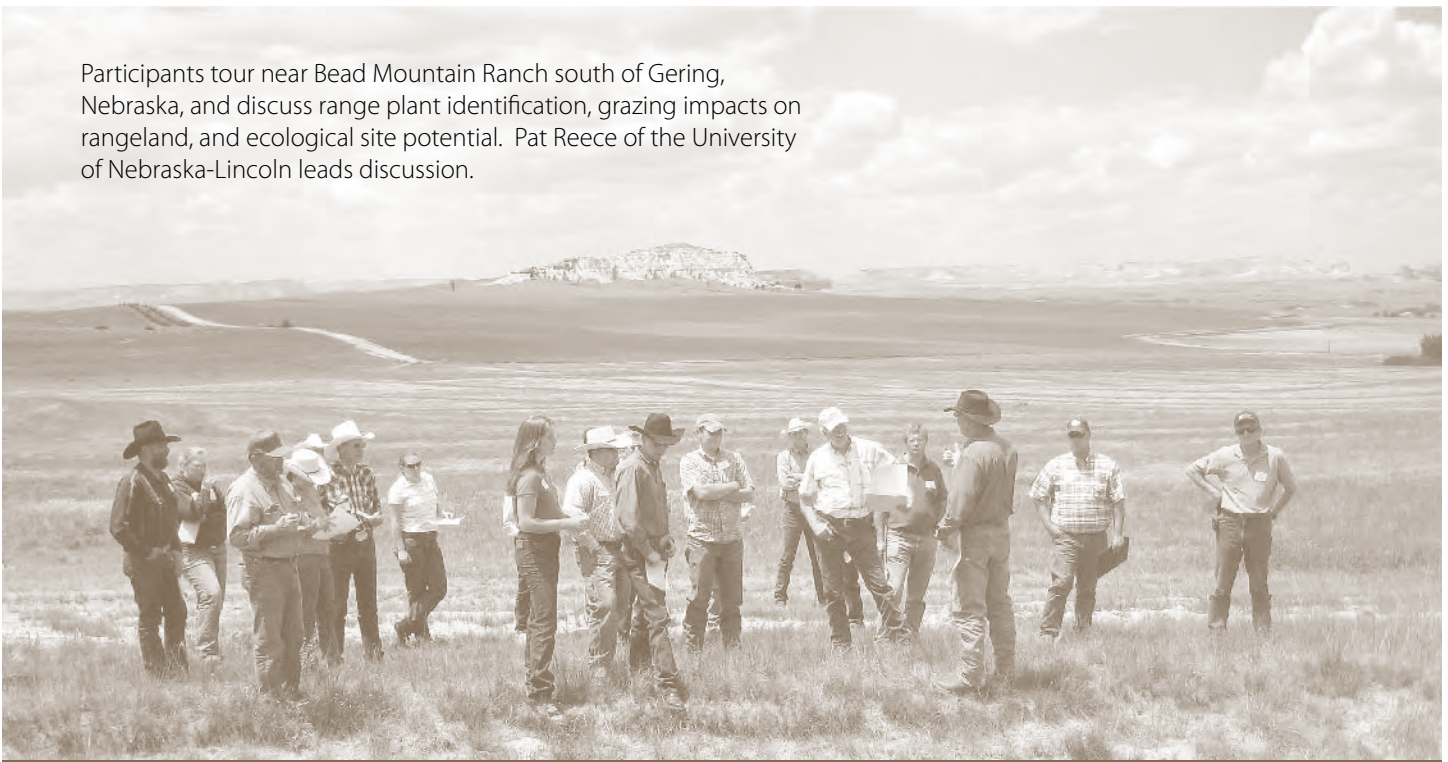
I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks and regards,



Glen Whipple

Participants tour near Bead Mountain Ranch south of Gering, Nebraska, and discuss range plant identification, grazing impacts on rangeland, and ecological site potential. Pat Reece of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln leads discussion.



## Ranch practicum draws high praise from participants

By Steven L. Miller,  
Senior Editor  
Office of Communications  
and Technology

**"Without a doubt, it was the best learning experience I've ever been involved with...I learned more from this class than from five years of college."**

—Practicum participant

Last year's initial High Plains Ranch Practicum presented by extension educators and cattle industry professionals received high praise from participants.

"Without a doubt, it was the best learning experience I've ever been involved with...I learned more from this class than from five years of college," one participant wrote.

That may sour ag college recruiters, but it's sweet to collaborators Dallas Mount, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service educator serving Goshen, Laramie, and Platte counties, and Aaron Berger, University of Nebraska-Lincoln extension educator for Kimball, Banner, and Cheyenne counties. Twenty-three signed up for the course, which had five sessions over eight days from June 2007 to January this year.

Mount credits the quality of the speakers and the hands-on opportunity for the success. "We went for the best-known speakers and presenters in the region, nationally known people," he says. "The interaction level that participants were able to have with the speakers was unique. For speakers like these, you are usually one in an audience of 800."

Economist Harlan Hughes, professor emeritus from North Dakota State University, is one of those speakers. He also praised the practicum.

"It was a very good program," says Hughes, who lives in Laramie. "I think one of the key things is you can get so much more in depth when you have multi-day programs. I think one of the challenges and the weakness of the extension service is to have such short programs. You never get beyond the freshman material. When you go into longer series, the second day can be built on the first, and the third day on the second. To me, that's the key."



"A good number of folks said range management and grazing system planning



Above, Jerry Volesky of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln speaks on grazing records at Scottsbluff, Nebraska.



Mount has sent 1,600 flyers to recruit for this year's class. The practicum's Web site is <http://HPRanchPracticum.com>. The first session was June 9. Cost of the practicum this year is \$600. Mount received notification from the Washington State University Western Center for Risk Management Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) they will provide \$400 scholarships to participants.

The course was modified from the Nebraska Ranch Practicum. "Aaron Berger sat down with (UW extension beef specialist) Steve Paisley, (extension educator) Wayne Tatman, and me and asked what we thought about doing this, and we said 'absolutely,'"

says Mount. The Nebraska program is built on the ecology of the Sand Hills and was adjusted to fit the variable grasses and precipitation of Wyoming.

Participants came from Goshen, Platte, Laramie, Albany, Johnson, and Campbell counties in Wyoming and from all over the Nebraska Panhandle.

Experience ranged. "We had a nice cross section," says Mount. "Some grew up on ranches and were extremely experienced and progressive ranchers. Then there were the folks who married into the ranch. They were coming back to the ranch they married into and looking to learn the business."

Mount speculated the more experienced ranchers were there for Hughes. "Harlan was a major part of



were two of the most beneficial aspects of the class.” — *Dallas Mount*



this,” notes Mount. “Harlan is one of the best-known livestock economists. Being able to work with him at the level we did, I think that was what many were there for. The person who said it was the best learning experience was also intrigued by other folks on the agenda, like Randy Hunter of the Wheatland area, who consults with feedlots around the country. One of his expertise areas is low-stress livestock handling.”

Participants were asked at the last session what they took home and applied. A few said they took what Randy taught and used it. For example, learning how to load, with no fences or corrals, livestock into a trailer. “They get cattle to jump in the trailer,” says Mount. “It sounds wild, but it works.”



Dallas Mount

Grazing system planning was another key area. “A lot of ranchers are good on the livestock end of things, but the range, plants, and ecosystem are more of a stretch for them,” says Mount. “A good number of folks said range management and grazing system planning were two of the most beneficial aspects of the class.”

Mount and Berger worked with presenters to whittle out information not needed. “Before classes, we got on the telephone with presenters and went through what they were going to talk about. We served as the sifting committee. We kept asking our presenters what is the take-home message? It was a challenge to us to get down to the nuts and bolts.”

Producers working their financial records continue to be a soft spot. The business side is also a target for Hughes. Before his retirement, he traveled the northern plains talking with ranchers. He says he spent a lot of time at kitchen tables. “Because of that, I have a pretty good feel for the economics of the ranching business,” he said. “Traditionally, ranchers haven’t focused

on the business side. They believed if they increased production that would take care of the business side. That’s not the case anymore.”

That’s why he favors multi-day programs.

“In many cases, we are back to the basics. You can do a 30-minute presentation and update them on the livestock side,” he says. “On the business side, you can go in and talk about managerial accounting, but some have very little experience in accounting. You have to teach accounting before managerial accounting. In my mind, the business aspect is what’s changing for the ranchers. The ones who are going to survive are going to have to increase their business savvy. That’s the challenge I see as an economist.”

A Bureau of Land Management firefighter uses a drip torch during prescribed fire operations this spring on the Double H Ranch and adjoining federal and state lands southeast of Ten Sleep. (Photo courtesy BLM)



## UW CES, ranchers, and agencies collaborate to improve

*By Robert Waggener,  
Editor  
Office of Communications  
and Technology*

**S**mokey Bear would have bristled years ago had such a scene unfolded before him – a federal government firefighting crew purposely torching juniper trees and sage on a ranch in north-central Wyoming that is home to many wildlife species, including black bears.

Even Smokey, whose message for nearly 60 years was “Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires,” now realizes the role fire can play in maintaining healthy ecosystems. SmokeyBear.com now devotes nearly as much space to “Good Fires” as “Bad Fires,” and, in 2001, Smokey’s message was updated to “Only You Can Prevent Wildfires.”

Many are happy public perception is changing when it comes to “Forest Fires” vs. “Wildfires.” Among them are Bruce and Georgia Weeter, owners of the Double H Ranch near Ten Sleep, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) Educator Barton Stam, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regional fuels program manager Jim Wolf, and others.

They are collaborating to improve habitat for wildlife and livestock – and reduce the potential for serious wildfire – on 13,000 acres of public and private lands at the foot of the Big Horn Mountains 20 miles southeast of Ten Sleep.

Their main tool – prescribed fires.

This is one of numerous habitat projects in the Big Horn Basin and across Wyoming utilizing such fires. Stam got involved in the Double H Ranch project because the Weeters requested his help.

“We consider Barton an extremely valuable resource in giving us guidance and input,” Bruce Weeter says. “He spent time on horseback with us looking at range conditions and talking about the science of vegetative communities we have and some of the opportunities we have to improve those communities.”

Stam says, “I thought it was a good opportunity to

“Our goal is to burn in a mosaic pattern to increase habitat diversity and improve forage for elk and other wildlife.”

– Jim Wolf,  
Bureau of Land  
Management

**13,000 acres**

get involved with a ranch that is looking to do progressive things to benefit the ranch, livestock, wildlife, and the land.”

Stam has a bachelor’s degree in range management and a master’s degree in range science, both from Utah State University, and he was previously involved in projects that involved government agencies.

“When you work on public lands, you are working with federal agencies tasked with multiple uses that need to be balanced,” Stam says. “It’s been great to work with the Weeters on this project, and it’s also been great to work with the other big players.” They include the BLM

and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD).

“In this part of Wyoming, about every ranch has some public land in it so we need to work together,” says Wolf, who is stationed in the BLM’s Worland Field Office. “If you are not working together, you are generally not getting positive things done.”

Wolf says the BLM is collaborating with dozens of ranchers and other agencies in the Big Horn Basin to improve habitat using prescribed fire. “We have been at it since the early ’80s. Our goal is to burn in a mosaic pattern to increase habitat diversity and improve forage for elk and other wildlife.”

On some lands, this involves burning old aspen stands to spur growth of young aspen, and, in other areas like the Double H Ranch and adjacent public lands, it means setting fire to juniper trees and sagebrush. Years of fire suppression have reduced the production of grasses and forbs, allowed sagebrush stands to become old and decadent, and permitted juniper to rapidly encroach.

“There has been a tremendous encroachment of juniper up and down the west slope of the Big Horns,” Weeter says. “This long-range plan isn’t about the eradication of juniper and sagebrush, it’s about healthy vegetative communities of different age classes.”

Wolf explains that juniper out-competes other

plants for water, nutrients, and light. “When juniper starts encroaching, you can end up with two things – juniper and dirt.”

When this happens, Stam notes, “You don’t have an understory of grasses and forbs. This reduces habitat for wildlife and livestock, and it can also lead to soil erosion.”

Wolf says grass and forb production can increase four-fold following a prescribed fire in stands of old, decadent sagebrush and even more so in areas thick with juniper.

Weeter, who previously ranched in Montana, where he also served as regional manager for the American Angus Association, purchased the Double H Ranch in 1991. The Weeters own 5,000 acres and lease an additional 5,000 acres from the BLM and 3,000 acres from the state.

“I was taken by the

resources here along the southern Big Horns. It’s beautiful country. It’s wildlife-rich country,” Weeter says. “There are a lot of old-time family ranches that still exist; they date back to the late 1880s.”

About the Double H Ranch, he notes, “We were specifically attracted to this place because of how well cared for it was; the family that was on here since the 1920s ran both sheep and cattle, and they were good operators. This was a ranch that had healthy vegetative communities when we arrived,” he says.

Though Weeter says he worked incredibly hard to manage the land properly, years of fire suppression coupled with approximately eight years of extreme drought allowed stands of juniper to spread. It also led to large expanses of mature



Bruce Weeter, who owns the Double H Ranch southeast of Ten Sleep, is collaborating with others, including the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department, to improve wildlife habitat and livestock grazing on private and public lands.

sagebrush that allowed little production of grass and forbs.

Weeter says he installed stock tanks and 16 miles of water lines. “This allowed us to distribute the cattle better across the landscape and use different parts of the ranch at different times of the year.”

Collaborating with others, he also conducted small prescribed fires over a six-year period starting in 1993 after hearing a presentation by Tom Whitson, professor emeritus in the College of Agriculture’s Department of Plant Sciences and retired UW CES weed specialist.

The Washakie County Conservation District hosted an area tour in the early 1990s featuring a number of speakers, and one of the stops was the Double H Ranch. Whitson talked about the natural fire cycle in the

**“We’re talking about enhancing habitat for all critters, both the wildlife and the cattle. They go hand-in-hand in our opinion.”**

*– Bruce Weeter*

Big Horns, and he noted the frequency in the juniper-sagebrush areas was about 30 years, Weeter recalls. “That made a strong impression on me, and we are now trying to replicate that cycle.”

Within a short time after the burns in the 1990s, Weeter says, “We saw a tremendous revitalization of indigenous grass species, forbs, and woody plants like chokecherry. And, several years later, we started seeing lots of young sagebrush plants returning, even in an area that burned incredibly hot.”

Realizing the benefits, Weeter started meeting with Stam and representatives of the BLM and WGFD to develop a long-term management plan on his ranch and the public lands he leases.

“We want this plan to be as science-based as possible, not political,” Weeter says. “We’re talking about enhancing habitat for all critters, both the wildlife and the cattle. They go hand-in-hand in our opinion.”

The goal is to burn 300 to 600 acres each year to create a mix of grasslands, healthy riparian areas, and stands of variably aged sagebrush, ponderosa pine, and juniper. Elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, black bear, mountain lion, sage grouse, and migrating birds are among the wildlife species that will benefit.

“It’s ideal to have a mosaic of plant communities



Barton Stam

and age classes,” Stam says. “This helps meet the needs of many different wildlife species. The older sagebrush and juniper provide hiding cover for deer, sage grouse, and other wildlife, and the younger-aged grasses, forbs, and sagebrush provide more food.”

The Double H Ranch was one of the stops during a June 3 tour of the Big Horn Basin Sage Grouse Working Group among others, including ranchers and representatives of private industry and agencies.

“This ties back to the things we are doing with vegetative communities on our ranch and the public lands,” Weeter says. “Should this project be successful on a long-term basis, we hope it will encourage a lot of other cooperators to do likewise. Any contribution we can make to encourage these kinds of habitat programs in a much larger area of the Big Horns will benefit everyone.”

Juniper and sagebrush burn during a prescribed fire this spring on the Double H Ranch and adjacent public lands. (Photo courtesy BLM)





# Prescribed burning depends on science, planning, and Mother Nature

*By Robert Waggener, Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology*

**M**other Nature often dictates if a wildfire will start and how many acres will burn. The same holds true for prescribed fires.

That was the case for prescribed fires on the Double H Ranch near Ten Sleep during spring 2007 and 2008. The goal is to burn 300 to 600 acres each year on the ranch as part of a long-term habitat improvement project, but only 30 acres burned last year and 50 acres this year.

“They were feeble attempts,” says ranch owner Bruce Weeter in reference to the unfavorable weather conditions.

The area had been in a severe drought for several years starting in 1999, but good precipitation the last couple of years, though greatly needed, hampered prescribed fire projects on the Double H Ranch and other lands in the Big Horn Basin.

“The unexpected must be expected when working with Mother Nature,” says University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service Educator Barton Stam, who is assisting the Weeters develop a long-range land management plan. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Wyoming Game and Fish Department have also been heavily involved in the project.

Jim Wolf, BLM regional fuels program manager based in Worland, says there is typically a two- to three-week window each spring for prescribed burns, and there is also an opportunity in the fall after several hard frosts. This all hinges on ideal conditions – plants that are dry enough to burn but plants that also have enough moisture to help prevent the prescribed fire from becoming a wildfire.

“You have to be a weather junkie,” Wolf says. “We send scouts out to monitor moisture levels in the vegetation.” When conditions are just right, he notes, the regional BLM office has enough resources to carry out approximately three prescribed burns in the Big Horn Basin at one time, depending on the size.

Weeter says vegetation contained high moisture levels this spring because of good winter snowpack.

“As soon as the vegetative communities spring to life and start pulling moisture from the ground, you lose the ability for prescribed fires that will carry,” he says. “The window is very narrow. Sometimes you might have a week or two, and there are times you might have a day or two.”

And there are times, as was the case the past two springs, ideal conditions never materialized. Weeter is hopeful Mother Nature will cooperate this fall for a prescribed burn as he knows the BLM crews will be prepared.

“I have attended a number of meetings and now realize there is a lot of preparation and planning beforehand, and there is a lot of coordination during the burn,” Weeter says. “Prescribed burning is a science.”



Park County Leadership Institute graduates (from left) Dannie Hammer, Robbi Welch, Bobbie Holder, Connie Zierke, and Kathy Thompson surprise Rhonda Shipp (middle), area community development educator with the UW Cooperative Extension Service, during a graduation ceremony May 2. UW President Tom Buchanan, who was unable to attend the graduation because of the weather, proclaimed May 2 Rhonda Jean Shipp Day at UW in honor of her many years of work with extension.

## UW president honors extension

By Steven L. Miller, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and  
Technology

**"I was  
overwhelmed  
beyond words."  
—Rhonda Shipp**

What Rhonda Shipp of Cody teaches in her leadership institutes even prevails against Wyoming snowstorms.

While those qualities May 2 couldn't lift through the storm an airplane carrying University of Wyoming President Tom Buchanan and College of Agriculture Dean Frank Galey to Cody or clear the road from Buffalo to Cody for extension service director Glen Whipple, Park County Leadership Institute (PCLI) members stepped up to keep events running smoothly.

Bill Stangl, a PCLI graduate and host for the day, presented the Rhonda Jean Shipp Day at the UW honor.

The news had been kept from Shipp, and, as she was on the stage

with PCLI graduates, she later said she began to feel something of a joke was being played.

It would not have been a first. "In past years, humor has very much been a part of PCLI graduation," notes Shipp, a UW Cooperative Extension Service educator. "One year, I woke up to 25 pink flamingos in my yard on graduation day. Another year, I received a gold star for 'person most likely to stand up to Donald Trump.' As Bill Stangl began reading the resolution, I was mentally prepared for something funny. Slowly it began sinking in that this was not a joke. When he finished reading, he handed me a faxed piece of paper, and I said, 'Is this for real?' That is the reason for the explosion of

Her enthusiasm for teaching and learning is matched by her exceptional skills. Rhonda is well deserving of this honor. She stands among the university's best." — *Glen Whipple*

laughter in the photo as they all said 'YES! It's for real.'" After the initial shock and disbelief, she says, "I was overwhelmed beyond words."

Shipp has announced she will retire from the extension service in 2009. This was her last PCLI graduating class. "There are 159 PCLI graduates now," she notes. "Half of them were standing with me

"The disappointment was soon overcome by the exhilaration of her friends and students as they realized the magnitude of the award, and they shared this special moment with Rhonda," she says. "With great appreciation, the PCLI board believed Dr. Tom Buchanan had presented Rhonda with an award that closely distinguishes her career impact

that could be delivered, but that I would be seeing Tom at an event soon and would mention it to him," says Bostrom. "I did so, and Tom indicated he would do something and he did!"

The recognition is on target, says Whipple. "Rhonda is greatly respected and appreciated by the people of the communities she serves," he notes. "She

leadership issues of my own," she says. "I am a more confident business owner and person overall because of the PCLI and my relationship with Rhonda."

In those 12 years of the PCLI, Shipp surrounded herself with extremely competent people and, through the group, raised the bar in leadership training in Wyoming, says Long.

## educator with Rhonda Jean Shipp Day

up front when the resolution was read. That was what made it so meaningful – that we were standing together as one, united in our beliefs that community leadership is a shared responsibility, and that we all have the capacity to lead in some way."

As the snow fell in Park County, the anticipation of having Buchanan make the presentation waned and the group began working to have Whipple make the presentation. Both plans fell through, but the disappointment of them not making the presentation soon disappeared, says Sherry Long, PCLI board/steering committee liaison.

on the extension service, of which PCLI is a part."

Long had contacted UW Trustee Dave Bostrom of Worland to ask if he would talk to the trustees about an award for Shipp. "He told me he had talked to Dr. Buchanan and that he was going to come up with something," she relates. "We didn't even know what it was until two days before the graduation."

Bostrom knew Shipp from her work in the Big Horn Basin and the Washakie Leadership Institute, which she facilitated. "I told Sherry that Rhonda had already received nearly every award

provides a powerful example for all the university the impact an educator can have by engaging her community and leading through teaching and service. I applaud Rhonda and am proud of her accomplishments."

Shipp brought several Park County leaders together in 1995 to design a leadership program; seven classes have since graduated, and those members share a professional and personal bond, says Long.

Long began her PCLI class in 2005. "I have learned many new leadership skills, and Rhonda has guided me through some personal

Shipp has facilitated leadership institutes in Big Horn and Washakie counties, and Long says she motivates each participant to levels they didn't know existed for themselves.

Bostrom notes Shipp cares about what she does and how she can positively impact not only the work she does but the people she works with.

Notes Whipple, "Her enthusiasm for teaching and learning is matched by her exceptional skills. Rhonda is well deserving of this honor. She stands among the university's best."



# 4-H program takes off at F.E. Warren Air Force Base

*By Robert Waggener, Editor  
Office of Communications  
and Technology*

**"We want to let the kids know we will be there for them because it can't be easy when a parent gets deployed."**

*Geneva Good,  
UW Collegiate  
4-H Club President*



Jeremy Green

After two years of planning, 4-H has taken flight at the F.E. Warren Air Force Base near Cheyenne. 4-H, the youth arm of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES), is now one of several youth programs offered at the base.

The first 4-H club meeting was April 30, and it attracted about a dozen youths who have parents serving in the Air Force. The youths, mostly ages 9 and 10, will name their club, elect officers, and select 4-H project areas and a community service project at upcoming meetings. The first 4-H military day camp was July 7-9 at Laramie County Community College.

"I'm excited about the program, the opportunity to expand our 4-H programming to an arena of youths where there is an obvious need," says UW CES State 4-H Program Coordinator Johnathan Despain. "A lot of these young people have parents who are stationed abroad, and we believe 4-H will offer them positive activities and will help provide some stability in their lives."

Jeremy Green, former 4-H educator for Laramie County, initiated efforts in 2006 to build a 4-H program at the base.

"The program on base gives a fresh perspective to Wyoming 4-H in that it offers non-traditional programming to a different audience of youths," Green says. "I want people to understand the

significance 4-H can have on all young people, not just your traditional rural county youths. 4-H is for everyone."

Federal funds through the 4-H military grant program allowed UW CES to hire its first 4-H youth military educator, Jenna Evans. She started in January and has worked closely with representatives of F.E. Warren youth programs.

"They have been great. The staff at the youth center has been very supportive," Evans says. Among those she has worked with are Dawna Miller, program director for the F.E. Warren Youth Center, and Andrea Black, a program coordinator for the center.

Black says the youths who showed up for the first 4-H meeting had fun while learning life skills at the same time.

"We played a team-building game, and the kids also had a great time with molding clays. They were making all kinds of crazy stuff," Black says.

The youths talked about the 4-H projects they are interested in. Among those topping the list were the dog project, health and fitness, entomology, clay works, scrapbooking, cooking, and cake decorating. Other activities that have been discussed are shooting sports, photography, bird watching, and livestock. Black says the goal is to have one monthly 4-H meeting the second Wednesday of each month and organized activities three times a week.



About a dozen youths attended the first 4-H meeting at F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

“On our part, we’re really trying to market the program. We have a lot of kids here on the base; it’s just a matter of getting them involved and to buy into it,” Black says. “We’re working on trying to get the word out. So far, so good.”

The UW Collegiate 4-H Club, which Despain advises, is making plans to begin working with the 4-H club at the base this fall.

“We feel we can really accomplish something over there. We want to let the kids know we will be there for them because it can’t be easy when a parent gets deployed,” says UW Collegiate 4-H Club President Geneva Good of Fairplay, Colorado, who is majoring in agricultural communications in the College of Agriculture. “We would like to help them understand the 4-H teaching methods and learn-by-doing.”

Evans says the Laramie County Junior Leaders have also stepped

forward to help the 4-H club on the base, and Despain adds that a number of 4-H volunteers in the Cheyenne area are also assisting.

Despain says the F.E. Warren Air Force Base has an after-school program that allows youths to participate in activities, play, work with computers, and do homework. One goal of the 4-H military program is to complement what’s already offered at the base. “We’ll have structured organizational programming around the interests of the kids,” he says.

Despain says he believes the new 4-H program will tie in nicely with 4-H programs offered at other U.S. military bases.

“No matter where a family moves, 4-H could be there because many military bases, even some overseas, have 4-H. We can become a constant in the lives of the youths,” Despain says.

He thanked the numerous people at the base and within UW CES and



Jenna Evans is the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service’s first 4-H youth military educator. Evans, working with former 4-H youth educator Jeremy Green in the Laramie County UW CES office, and others, has helped initiate the first 4-H program at F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

4-H who collaborated to start the 4-H program at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, starting with Green’s vision.

“Jeremy has been the catalyst for getting this going, and, through his efforts, we were able to hire Jenna,” Despain says.

Evans says the job is a natural fit. “I was born and raised in 4-H, and I loved it. Plus, I’m married into military, and that helps bring the job home.” Her husband, Robert Evans, is a captain in the Air Force and is stationed at F.E. Warren.

Evans is a 2006 UW graduate with a bachelor’s degree in family and consumer sciences with emphasis in textiles and merchandising. A native of Greybull, she graduated from Greybull High School in 2002. She is an 11-year alumnus of the Big Horn County 4-H program and completed a summer 4-H internship in Park County in 2004.

Simply put, Evans says, “4-H is a great program for kids.”

Members of the University of Wyoming 4-H Collegiate Club met with the Laramie County 4-H youth military educator, Jenna Evans, third from left, to offer their assistance with the new 4-H program at F.E. Warren Air Force Base near Cheyenne. Among the members of the 4-H Collegiate Club are, from left, Kyle Atwater, Geneva Good, Erin Therriault, Krista Amos, Brian Thomas, Amber Mathisen, and Rachel Brazil.



## Collegiate 4-H Club active on campus and beyond

By Robert Waggener, Editor  
Office of Communications  
and Technology

The University of Wyoming Collegiate 4-H Club helps with numerous activities on campus, in the Laramie community, and beyond.

The club's president, Geneva Good, said the student organization is already making plans for the fall semester, including helping with the new 4-H program at F.E. Warren Air Force Base (see story on page 12).

"Several of the members in our group are passionate about club activities and community service," says Good, a senior agricultural communications major from Fairplay, Colorado.

The club's adviser is Johnathan Despain, state 4-H program coordinator for the UW Cooperative Extension Service.

"They are a good group of young people," Despain

says. "They are students first, but they look at ways to get involved on campus and in the community helping others, including 4-Hers."

Good says being involved with the Collegiate 4-H Club has allowed her to give back to a program that has meant so much to her.

"4-H helped me make friends in South Park High School in Fairplay, and it helped me develop leadership skills and get out of my shyness," Good says. "I like working with youths, and I've always been interested in being an extension educator."

Being involved in 4-H as a club member and now a collegiate member has made Good realize just how important the program is to such a variety of young people.

"4-H has activities for everyone, not just a certain group of people," says Good, who notes the UW Collegiate

4-H Club has experienced a number of those activities with Albany County 4-Hers.

During the 2007-08 school year, the club assisted at the Albany County 4-H Carnival and helped judge record books for Albany County 4-H. One of the members, Amber Mathisen of Laramie, who is majoring in family and consumer sciences, was involved with planning for and activities at the 2008 National Collegiate 4-H Conference in Denver in February, and she represented UW at the 2007 Western Regional Collegiate 4-H Conference in South Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

Beyond 4-H, Good says, the club is involved with UW and College of Agriculture activities including the Welcome Back and Ag Day barbecues, and it assists at the Albany County Cow-Belles' Ag Expo for the county's third and fourth graders.

Collegiate 4-H Club officers for the 2008-09 school year follow: Good, president; Brian Thomas of Lusk, anthropology, vice president; Cami Andrie of Gillette, chemical engineering, secretary; Lindsey Noreen of Bowman, North Dakota, animal and veterinary sciences (ANVS), treasurer; and Abby Frank of Fleming, Colorado, education, publicity chair.

Members of the club include: Krista Amos, Cope, Colorado, agricultural education; Kyle Atwater, Genoa, Colorado, rangeland ecology and watershed management; Rachel Brazil, Maryland Heights, Missouri, anthropology; Rebecca Harrison, Bakersfield, California, ANVS; Mathisen; James Roberts, Douglas, ANVS; and Erin Therriault, Wheatland, pharmacy and sociology.

# Extension service helps nonprofits bolster strengths

By Steven L. Miller,  
Senior Editor  
Office of Communications  
and Technology

Members of the organizing team of the Snowy Range Nonprofit Institute (SRNI) about six years ago had a vision: provide nonprofit volunteer board members a high-quality educational experience at the University of Wyoming.

About two years later, extension educators Mary Martin in Jackson and Milt Green in Casper had double vision – they, too, agreed the mission to help the state’s nonprofits was important, and extension’s Community Development Education (CDE) initiative team became involved in the institute.

“The SRNI had been run through the Outreach School, but they decided that creating curriculum and programs were outside their mission,” says Martin. “The community capacity board training is something the CDE team is concentrating on. When Outreach announced it didn’t fit in their mission, SRNI approached our team. It sounded like a wonderful opportunity for us to have access to the incredibly diverse volunteers on campus. We, as a team, agreed to serve as the university’s



**“I think it’s critically important for nonprofits to have opportunities to network and have resources that can help them improve.” — Mary Martin**



Mary Martin



Milt Green

sponsoring entity for the institute.”

Other members of the CDE team are educators Juliet Daniels, Rhonda Shipp, and Bill Taylor; specialists include, from the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Roger Coupal, associate professor and department head, Cole Ehmke, Tom Foulke, John Hewlett, Alan Schroeder, Tex Taylor, and from the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Professor Randy Weigel. CES Associate Director Duane Williams is the administrative liaison.

Addressing issues of workers from multi-generations working side

by side and bolstering skills for volunteer staff and board members are major thrusts of this year’s SRNI. “Rural Nonprofit Leadership: Connecting the Generations” was the theme of meetings August 3-5 at the UW Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center in Laramie.

For information, see [www.srni.org/](http://www.srni.org/).

“I think it’s critically important for nonprofits to have opportunities to network and have resources that can help them improve,” says Martin.

Debra Beck, coordinator of the SRNI and co-founder, says the institute provides a high-quality, stimulating,

and intellectual environment for learning so participants can take what they learned back and apply in their own communities.

This year, two tracks offered training for staff leadership and for volunteer leadership. “In the past, we have had a number of folks who are executive directors who tend to have different issues than volunteer board members,” says Martin, who specializes in community development education. “Boards are trying to learn how to set policy and shape the future for an organization; staff is trying to deal with the day-to-day operations more effectively.”

Having resources that can help nonprofits improve is critical, she says. Nonprofits have helped build infrastructures in communities, such as nursing homes and low-income housing. Whether providing social capital, such as those working with health and social issues, or human capital, by providing training for addressing issues, “nonprofits play a huge part in the quality of life in our communities,” says Martin.

The nonprofit sector is the real backbone of entrepreneurship in Wyoming, says Green, who also specializes in community development education. “There are a huge number of entrepreneurship ideas



that evolve out of nonprofits. Nonprofits are woven in and out of the capacity of communities. The nonprofit sector identifies the grassroots needs of people out there.”

Green sees the nonprofit sector in Wyoming as large and healthy. “Very healthy,” he says. “Where I see them struggling is the need for management skills.”

One tool is appreciative inquiry, a process of improvement that looks forward instead of back. “It came out, not surprisingly, from the business sector,” Green says. “Corporations were tired of being in the problem-solving mode all

the time. It was as though they were in crisis management. Appreciative inquiry gives the opportunity to envision what you’d like the company or a community to look like. It doesn’t dwell on the past but is rooted in the idea to move forward. You look at the past and identify existing assets rather than spending all the time and resources trying to do things that most likely will never happen because you don’t have the resources or the time. You look at what you have and make it grow.”

This year, there was a session on recruiting multi-generational workers.

“I’m not aware of any time in history we have had four generations represented in the workforce – the matures, the baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y,” says Green. “They are four totally different generations, and it is creating some management issues for nonprofit managers. The biggest difference I see is the conflict between Boomers and Generation X. Generation X’ers want it now and are not willing to yield. To mix all those in a nonprofit setting is a huge challenge for the nonprofit managers.”

# Volunteer of year, lifetime volunteer dedicate efforts to 4-H youths

*By Steven L. Miller, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications  
and Technology*

**T**anya Haun of Worland and Marius Wilson of Granite Canyon west of Cheyenne received volunteer of the year awards from the Wyoming State 4-H Office earlier this year.

Haun received volunteer of the year, an award for those having less than 10 years service, and Wilson received the lifetime volunteer award, for those having more than 10 years service.

Wilson has served Wyoming 4-H for more than 31 years. "Marius is always at the forefront in moving the Wyoming 4-H program into new areas and is constantly looking for ways to improve the program to meet youths' needs across the state," writes Jeremy Green, former 4-H educator for Laramie County. "Within those 31 years, he has been an invaluable asset to both the Laramie County 4-H program and to the Wyoming 4-H program."

Wilson partnered with school administrators to get 4-H a recognized club program so 4-H youths within the schools can receive school district dollars to support their needs in attending various leadership conferences, trips, activities, and opportunities.

At the state level, he has held various positions on the Wyoming State 4-H Leaders Council and on numerous state developmental committees. He has also served at the Wyoming State Fair and Rodeo for many years as a superintendent of the static projects.

"Marius is always willing to help with whomever and whatever is

needed, whether a helping hand or financial help, when something is needed to keep a project going," writes Kay Moyer, president of the Wyoming State 4-H Leaders Council. Moyer and Wilson were in 4-H together, and both became leaders.

## Volunteer Leader of the Year

Haun has been named Washakie County Outstanding 4-H Leader for two consecutive years. "Tanya has only been a leader for three years, but she took Washakie County by storm!" writes Tamara Drake, a 4-H leader in the county in a nomination letter. Haun is the primary leader of the Trail Blazers 4-H Club, whose focus is community service. "Tanya seems to have endless energy," notes Drake. "Tanya has garnered support from the parents in the club, and it is very common to see large numbers of parents at the community club meetings, fund-raising activities, and community service events."

Amber Wallingford, 4-H/youth extension educator in Washakie County, says Haun has become very dedicated to the 4-H program. "She is involved, is encouraging to members and other leaders, and truly enjoys helping youths in our community."

Haun, whose husband, Jim, is also a 4-H leader, is president of the Washakie County 4-H Council. She and Jim received the Outstanding 4-H Leader in Washakie County award in 2006.

Haun is very passionate about what 4-H stands for, notes Ellen Viles, a 4-H leader in Washakie County. "Tanya ensures all kids in her club are constantly learning and experiencing



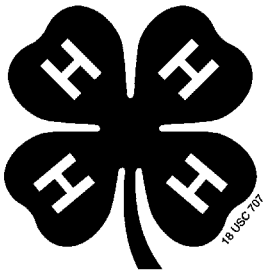
Marius Wilson, who has served Wyoming 4-H for 31 years, received the lifetime volunteer award.



Tanya Haun, left, receives the volunteer of the year award from Kay Moyer, president, Wyoming State 4-H Leaders Council.

the different aspects of 4-H, whether it's trying a new project or becoming a leader or a teacher to a new member," Viles writes. "Tanya ensures this is all a learning experience for the kids so that next time they are faced with something, they will know where to go and what to do."

## Natrona County 4-H extension educator's ag efforts draw honors



A 4-H extension educator who serves Natrona County received volunteer of the year and agribusiness person of the year honors in 2007.

Colleen Campbell received the awards from the Casper Area Chamber of Commerce last September for her educational and promotional efforts of agriculture.

Campbell is on the chamber's ag committee.

"I'm absolutely humbled to join the ranks of those who have been recipients," she says. "I applaud their emphasis placed on education through the cooperative extension service for youths in ag-related areas."

The committee educates the community about its agricultural base, says Campbell, "and to understand the importance of the ag community in the trade area of Casper and Natrona County and enhance the communication between the ag community and business community."

If agriculture doesn't let the business community know what its needs are, then the business community can't fulfill those needs in trade for rural consumers, says Campbell.



Colleen Campbell

Tours of ag-related businesses and government entities are ways to increase communication, and the 4-H Expo, held every Saturday from February through May, is another.

One of the largest events, the annual ranch-city party, is another. More than 1,200 attend the banquet. "The businesses have the ag community come in for a nice dinner and dance," says Campbell. "It's a thank-you night, a nice time for ranchers and farmers to see neighbors they rarely see all at once like that."

A survey taken a few years ago determined the top reason people attended was to see neighbors on a happy note, rather than, for example, other functions such as funerals. 4-H ben-

efits from the silent auction, and 4-Hers serve tables.

Having the farm and urban residents know more about each other is challenging, she says. One way is to look at the needs of the community and try to address those in any means possible through the chamber.

"Another is to involve as many of those making a living from farming/ranching to become more involved in the chamber and try to get more producers on the ag chamber committee," says Campbell. "One thing I'd like to see happen is for a lot of us to stretch our minds so we can learn about each other's livelihood."

**"I'm absolutely humbled to join the ranks of those who have been recipients."**

*– Colleen Campbell*

# Nutrition, fitness emphasized by educator during course at Wyoming Honor Conservation Camp

*By Steven L. Miller,  
Senior Editor  
Office of Communications  
and Technology*

An educator's efforts helped incarcerated males at the Wyoming Honor Conservation Camp create healthier lifestyles.

Vicki Hayman, who specializes in nutrition and food safety in Campbell, Crook, and Weston counties, taught eight volunteers at the state facility in Newcastle during an eight-week course last year.

The Wyoming Honor Conservation Camp, which holds about 238, was built in 1989. Inmates fight fires, work on state lands, and perform various community service efforts. The Wyoming Boot Camp, for youthful offenders, is in the same facility and has a capacity of about 56.

"The course was basic," says Hayman. "They learned about the benefits of exercise and a little bit about safety and injury prevention. They had to design a fitness program to fit their needs. The course had a nutrition component, and that was difficult for them."

There is a limited selection of foods at the facility. "We discussed wise choices

from what their selections are," says Hayman. "They don't have a lot of free reign."

Hayman, who had taught at the facility before, approached officials about teaching a fitness and health course. "My target was to get men who weren't exercising very much more involved for health reasons," she notes. "If they weren't walking, to start. If they weren't lifting weights, to start. The goal was for the health benefits."

All incoming inmates take the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions test instrument to determine what their needs might be, whether social skills, life skills, family needs, among others. Appropriate courses are then offered, and the inmates can volunteer to attend, says Linda Hunt, case work manager at the facility.

Whether courses have an influence on the inmates is really up to them, she says.

"We don't make anyone change," notes Hunt. "We provide them with information. What we observe is the more information one has, the more knowledge



Vicki Hayman

someone has to make more positive choices."

Changes in behavior can usually be observed after six months or more, she says.

First-time volunteer instructors learn what they can and cannot do. Volunteers undergo an eight-hour course for working within the institution. "The first time was scary," says Hayman, "but the participants have been very well-behaved for the most part. There is still one or two who has an attitude. For the most part, they are willing and want to learn. They want to do something with themselves."

The volunteers set their goals, such as walking 30 minutes a day and lifting weights 45 minutes a day. "For some, the goal was aerobic and some strength

training," Hayman says, or both. They kept logs for muscular strength, cardiovascular fitness, and flexibility.

Participants varied in health levels. "There were some who were not doing anything. Just to get up to 30 minutes of walking was their goal," says Hayman. "There were a few gentlemen who were good on using weight machines but did not do much cardiovascular work. I tried to get them to do a balance of things."

The facility has a small weightroom with resistance machines – no free weights are allowed – and inmates can walk inside the building or outside within the confinement.

She encouraged discussion during the course, rather than having formal lectures. "That way they are contributing more," she says. "They preferred interaction within the class."

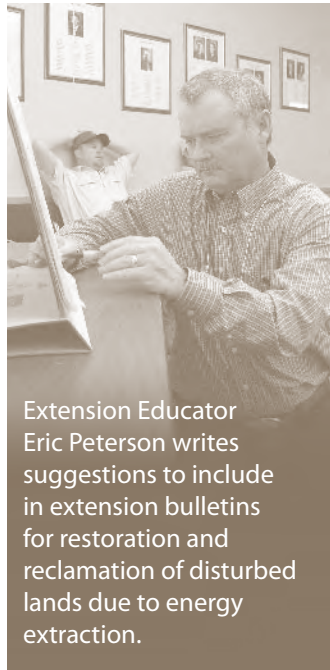
Lessons were customized for the class, but Hayman would like to have had incorporated more activities. "To be able to do more with them would have been beneficial," she notes. "I would modify it to include more activities the next go round."

## UW extension developing reclamation, restoration educational material

Hit and miss efforts to restore and reclaim disturbed lands have spurred an effort by the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service to develop written materials and possible how-to programs for reclamation industry professionals.

The efforts will be aimed at areas disturbed by energy extraction.

"There are folks in the reclamation industry who are doing very good work, but there are others who, either through ignorance or maybe not caring enough, are not doing a very good job," says Gene Gade, UW CES educator serving Campbell, Crook, and Weston counties. "There is a huge amount of land being disturbed, and it is going to impact the long-term future of Wyoming in profound ways. Calls have been made to the university



Extension Educator Eric Peterson writes suggestions to include in extension bulletins for restoration and reclamation of disturbed lands due to energy extraction.

and field offices from folks who don't know the difference between sagebrush and some lawn grass. I've been fairly appalled at some of the calls."

More than 40 representatives of government agencies, industry professionals, and from the University of Wyoming met in March in

Laramie to start hammering out the nuts and bolts of the effort. The impetus came from the UW CES Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources initiative team, of which Gade is chairman.

The effort is being funded by grant money from the School of Energy Resources via the College of Agriculture's Wyoming Reclamation and Restoration Center, says Lachy Ingram, a post-doctoral researcher in the Department of Renewable Resources in the College of Agriculture. Lachy will write the bulletins.

Jay Norton, extension soil specialist and assistant professor in soil fertility in the department, facilitated the Laramie meeting and developed the idea for the reclamation bulletin series. "This is turning out to be a great initiative to form the basis for a great ongoing working group," he says.

extensionconnection

August 2008

**Senior Editor**

Steven L. Miller

**Editor**

Robert Waggener

**Layout and Design**

Tana Stith

*Send comments or suggestions to:*

Glen Whipple  
Dept. 3354  
1000 E. University Ave.  
Laramie, WY 82071

(307) 766-5124

[glen@uwyo.edu](mailto:glen@uwyo.edu)

UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING

*The University of Wyoming  
is an equal opportunity/  
affirmative action institution.*



Printed on recycled paper

University of Wyoming  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Dept. 3354  
1000 E. University Ave.  
Laramie, WY 82071

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

PRESORT STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
LARAMIE, WY 82072  
PERMIT No. 1