

STATEWIDE

AQUATIC HABITAT PROGRAM

The aquatic habitat program in 2009 consisted of 7 regional aquatic habitat biologists (AHABs), aquatic habitat supervisor, aquatic habitat program manager, water management supervisor and the water management instream flow biologist. Efforts to convert the vacant Casper aquatic habitat biologist position into a fish passage coordinator were unsuccessful due to state imposed hiring restrictions and this position is now frozen for the foreseeable future. The Cody AHAB continues to focus on fish passage work. Two At-Will Contract Employees (AWEC's) worked for the section: one in Cody worked primarily on populating the fish passage database and one in Kemmerer worked on Bear River drainage projects. Finally, three seasonal Biologist Technicians assisted in the Laramie, Lander and Jackson regions. The flexibility and work assistance provided by hiring seasonal and AWEC employees continues to be a tremendous help in getting habitat benefits on the ground. On the negative side, lack of permanent personnel in Casper and lack of formally assigned personnel to fish passage work is seriously reducing our capacity to implement habitat projects in the Casper and Cody regions at the same time reducing our fish passage program effectiveness.

The revised SHP was approved by the WGFC in January 2009. The section began implementing the SHP by incorporating specific objectives and strategies from the SHP into individual performance work goals. In addition, SHP objectives and strategies are now directly included in Fish Division work plans and are being integrated into Fish Division Basin Management Plans. The SHP contains a broad umbrella of habitat maintenance and improvement actions for the entire Department. During the annual aquatic habitat section meeting a subset of 56 actions directly achievable by aquatic habitat biologists were identified and reviewed. These actions are drawn from all five SHP goals and span the range from landscape management and protection efforts to riparian and stream channel enhancements.

During calendar year 2009, the section was involved in at least 33 projects involving funding from the WGF D Trust Fund, dedicated WGF D fish passage funds, the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resource Trust (WWNRT) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), private lands partners, or Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) funding. These projects entail over \$3.5 million in total project cost and over \$1 million in Department funding. The WWNRT are partners on 13 of those projects and many are highlighted in the regional sections of this report. In addition, regional AHABs worked on other SHP actions that are not directly related to funded projects or are funded through the standard operational budget. These actions included habitat protection, inventory and assessment work, monitoring project function and habitat response, and habitat education efforts and training.

In recent years, the section has made a significant commitment to implementing natural channel design for stream improvement and restoration projects. Training is offered through Dave Rosgen of Wildland Hydrology. The series of 4 courses involves 6 weeks of training in understanding, assessing and designing stream restoration solutions that account for watershed conditions, sediment transport balance, and flow conditions. In 2009, five employees received further training in this important approach that will ensure long-lasting stream projects that are in balance with existing potential and ecological processes while improving aquatic habitat.

A team of aquatic and terrestrial habitat biologists and other department personnel was assembled in 2009 to develop department guidelines for treating Russian olive. This team considered cost effectiveness of treatment options, the ecological basis of control efforts and how to prioritize projects. Draft internal recommendations were developed and are being refined.

In 2009 a contract was established with the Department of Transportation photogrammetry office in Cheyenne to scan some 33 rolls of wide format film and convert it to digital format. The film was collected in the 1960's,

1970's and early 1980's from fixed wing flights over many of Wyoming's major rivers. This imagery, we believe, will provide a valuable historical reference of stream and riparian habitat conditions from which rates and types of change can be inferred and used to improve stream restorations. About 30 rolls were scanned in 2009 and the imagery occupies 500 gigabytes of memory.

Finally, in 2009, the Department emphasized identifying and reducing obstacles to getting projects "on the shelf" and implemented. In this spirit, funds were allocated to Fish Division for developing two projects: Encampment River below Riverside channel restoration and Green River corridor Russian olive mapping and project development. Coordination with partners, grantees and potential contractors occurred so that these project development efforts can begin in 2010. It is anticipated that projects with our partners will be identified and developed in late 2010.

In-Stream Flow Fishing Articles (Goal 4) - Tom Annear

Five educational articles were written that appeared in the department's Wildlife News publication (Figure 1). These articles were intended to direct readers to instream flow segments, make them aware of department actions in the instream flow program, and encourage support for instream flow water rights in general. Articles focused on South Cottonwood Creek, North Piney Creek, Middle Piney Creek, Big Sandstone Creek, and the Green River.



Figure 1. Creating public awareness of and support for the importance of effective water management and instream flows for fish and wildlife is an important and challenging task. Five articles drew attention to several instream flow segments that have been secured for public benefit on streams such as Coantag Creek shown here.

Instream Flow Water Rights (Goal 1) - Mike Robertson

Applications for instream flow water rights on 10 stream segments in the East Fork Wind River drainage were filed. In total, 53.6 miles of aquatic habitat for native Yellowstone cutthroat trout will be protected. All of the targeted stream miles were located on public lands owned by either the WGFC or US Forest Service (USFS). Five new instream flow studies were initiated that focus on native Snake River cutthroat trout habitat in the Hoback River drainage. The length of these stream segments has not yet been determined and filings will be prepared in 2010.

Fremont Lake Water Management (Goal 1) - Tom Annear

An offer from a private individual to purchase a storage right in Fremont Lake was investigated. This water right includes the understanding that the right could be changed from irrigation to fisheries or instream flow. Actions were taken by the Water Rights Management Team to study the desirability and feasibility of acquiring this right and the matter was advanced with a favorable determination to the WGFD Property Rights Team.

Fish Passage Inventory (Goal 2) - Lew Stahl

Work continued documenting attributes and locations of structures that potentially affect fish habitat connectivity. Natural stream barriers, diversions and headgates used for irrigation, municipal water supply, and power generation were added to the database inventory. The database now contains 731 site records gathered from various federal, state, and local entities via the internet and by direct field measurement. WGFD stream identification numbers were added to 364 of the total 460 structures obtained from the internet for better identification within the database. Internet locations for points-of-diversions are often listed by quarter section or even larger areas, so refinement to point locations is accomplished

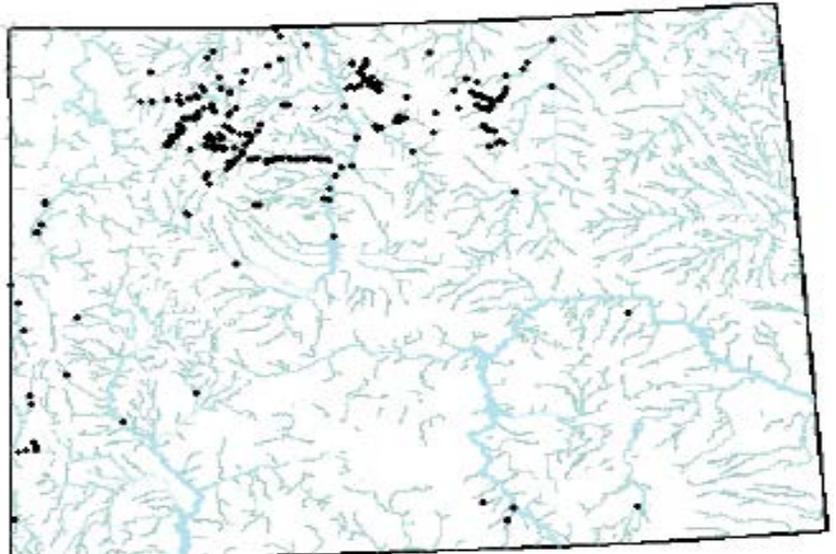


Figure 2. New or updated fish passage sites documented in 2009.

using topographic maps and aerial photos. Refined and new sites totaled 319 this year (Figure 2), with 173 sites field surveyed to collect site descriptions, measurements, and photographs. In addition to the database records, information from other partners like the Forest Service is instrumental in fully interpreting basin wide barrier issues and developing prioritized solutions. For example, the Bighorn National Forest (BNF) provided a road crossing inventory with 1448 road crossings, of which 433 have been field surveyed.

Fish Passage Project Development (Goal 2) - Lew Stahl

Efforts continued with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USFWS, USFS, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Trout Unlimited (TU), and private landowners to identify passage issues, share information, implement projects, and develop fish passage criteria for Wyoming. Ten multi-organization site tours were made throughout the state to discuss potential improvements and to share information on completed projects. Shared designs, design reviews, project coordination, and funding sources allowed twelve projects to be completed in the Cody, Sheridan, and Pinedale regions. Funding for these projects came from multiple sources including WVNRT, USFWS, NRCS, Conservation Districts, TU and WGFD. Two Game and Fish grants were awarded to Trout Unlimited and two multi-project block grants were awarded to Conservation Districts in the Sheridan region this year. Funding was secured for four projects scheduled for 2010, plus additional proposals were submitted for additional sites. Entrainment studies continued at Bear Creek Ditch and the North Fork Shoshone Valley Ditch this year and information concerning swimming and jumping abilities of specific fish species was obtained from consultants and shared with multiple entities.

Fish Passage Presentations (Goal 4) - Lew Stahl

Providing private landowners and the general public with an understanding of fish passage concerns and potential solutions is critical to active participation and improving habitat connectivity for fish. To assist in this understanding, presentations were provided to the East Yellowstone Chapter of TU and at the Statewide Trout Unlimited Council's annual meeting.

TERRESTRIAL HABITAT PROGRAM

The terrestrial habitat program in 2009 consisted of 8 regional terrestrial habitat biologists (THBs), 4 habitat extension biologist (HEBs) working out of NRCS District Offices, the terrestrial habitat program manager, the terrestrial habitat assistant program manager and the terrestrial habitat program administrative assistant. Two temporary positions, approximately 5 months total time, assisted THBs with projects in NW Wyoming.

The revised SHP was approved by the WGFC in January 2009. The section began implementing the SHP by incorporating specific objectives and strategies from the SHP into individual work schedules and performance work goals. The SHP contains a broad umbrella of habitat maintenance and improvement actions for the entire Department. It also directly relates to the Department's five year strategic plan habitat program.

During calendar year 2009, the section was involved in and administered funds for nearly 30 projects involving WGFD Trust Fund, nearly 20 projects involving the WWNRT, over 15 projects involving NRCS Farm Bill Programs and approximately 50 projects involving other partners including local, county, state and federal agencies, various non-government organizations (NGOs), conservation districts, weed and pest districts and private landowners among others. These projects entail nearly \$3.0 million in total on-the-ground project expenditures. The various partners and their contributions toward these projects are highlighted in the regional sections of this report. In addition, regional THBs and HEBs worked on other SHP actions that are not directly related to funded projects or are funded through the standard operational budget. These actions included habitat protection, inventory and assessment work, monitoring project function and habitat response, and habitat education efforts and training.

On a statewide basis, section personnel coordinated efforts on the Wildlife Division habitat portion of the season setting meetings and conducted, coordinated with and collated information collected by Wildlife Division personnel from over 200 established annual vegetation production and utilization transects. They also collected vegetation and habitat information on transects associated with various past enhancements. HEBs attend area Conservation District and NRCS meetings to promote wildlife habitat management and enhancement projects and NRCS Farm Bill programs. Section personnel are also responsible for coordinating annual meetings with federal land management agencies relative to wildlife habitat enhancement projects and larger federal projects that may affect wildlife habitat. Finally, they provided assistance at hunter check stations to collect tissues for chronic wasting disease analysis and other biological information from harvested animals and participated in sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse lek surveys. Most section personnel also serve on one or more Department species working groups (moose, bighorn sheep, sage grouse, pronghorn and mule deer) and are routinely asked to serve on various committees to address an issue or need such as the Russian olive treatment guideline group cited in the Aquatic Habitat Section above.

Finally, in 2009, the Department emphasized identifying and reducing obstacles to getting projects "on the shelf" and implemented. In this spirit, funds were allocated to Wildlife Division for developing three projects: North Laramie Range aspen improvements, Gros Ventre prescribed fire treatments on USFS lands and a sage grouse-grazing management project on private and BLM lands in SW Wyoming to develop water resources, livestock grazing plans and enhance and restore sagebrush communities. Coordination with partners, grantees and potential contractors occurred so that these project development efforts can begin in 2010.

HABITAT AND ACCESS MAINTENANCE

The habitat and access maintenance program in 2009 consisted of 6 regional supervisors, 1 statewide supervisor, 7 crew leaders, 7 specialists, the branch manager, the assistant branch manager and 8 temporary positions stationed across the state.

The branch is responsible for the management of Department managed lands that include 36 Wildlife Habitat Management Areas (WHMAs), 184 Public Access areas and 22 feedgrounds. In addition, there is a statewide crew which assists with habitat development projects. The WHMAs are managed for specific wildlife habitat purposes and are included within the SHP priority habitat areas within each WGFD Region. The branch is incorporating specific objectives and strategies from the SHP into regional work schedules.

As part of the SHP, the branch manages and maintains approximately 413,000 acres, 95 wetlands, 140 miles of ditches/drains, 3,500 acres of irrigated meadows, 2,000 acres of farmland, 250 acres of food plots and over 1,000 miles of fence for wildlife habitat purposes. To assist hunters and fisherman, another 1,100 miles of road, 388 parking areas, 45 boat ramps, 25 docks, 196 outhouses and over 6,000 signs are maintained.

During 2009, the branch also worked on other habitat development projects including sagebrush rejuvenation, guzzler developments, meadow improvements, wetland developments and aspen projects. Included within this, were the involvement and administration of 4 projects involving WGFD Trust Fund and 4 projects involving the WWNRT. These projects will provide almost \$300,000 of on-the-ground project expenditures. The habitat development project are highlighted in the regional sections of this report.

INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLICATIONS BRANCHES

Goal 4 – ‘Increase public awareness of wildlife habitat issues and the critical connection between healthy habitat and abundant wildlife populations’ is a critical component of the Department’s overall mission and the information and education program. This program is housed in the Services Divisions’ Customer Outreach and Publications Branch and Conservation Education and Information Branch. The mission of the information program is to disseminate information to promote public understanding and support for wildlife, wildlife habitat, wildlife conservation and the Department’s management programs. There are 10 positions within this branch who primarily work on a statewide basis. This branch publishes Wyoming Wildlife, Wyoming Wildlife News, prepares news releases and video and radio messages along with an electronic newsletter and provides various presentations and educational talks.

The mission of the Regional Information and Education Specialist Section of the Conservation Education and Information Branch is to work cooperatively with Department personnel to increase understanding and appreciation of Wyoming’s wildlife resources. The branch provides media outreach and wildlife conservation education programs for students, teachers, and other citizens of Wyoming. There are 7 positions within this branch stationed in WGFD regional offices around the state. Each regional I&E Specialist maintains a regional web page hosted on the WGFD web site. They also work closely with the Customer Outreach and Publications Branch preparing information and programs for Wyoming Wildlife, Wyoming Wildlife News and other news release information. This section branch along with Cheyenne branch personnel produces news releases for local papers, radio and television stations, conducts workshops and makes numerous presentations at schools and public programs oversees the Hunter Safety, Becoming an Outdoor Woman, and coordination of the annual Wyoming Hunting and Fishing heritage Exposition among others.

Overall the Publications Branch were involved in 43 efforts directed towards goal 4 and another 11 efforts with habitat as a component of the message. On a statewide basis, the Information and Education Branch were involved in 111 efforts directed towards goal 4 and another 84 efforts with habitat as a component of the mes-

sage. These efforts are farther summarized on a regional basis as follows: 1) Casper – 21 habitat and 3 indirect habitat; 2) Cody – 5 habitat and 21 indirect habitat; 3) Green River – 8 habitat and 47 indirect habitat; 4) Jackson – 9 habitat and 7 indirect habitat; 5) Lander – 7 habitat and 3 indirect habitat; 6) Laramie – 10 habitat and 1 indirect habitat; 7) Pinedale – 7 habitat and 1 indirect habitat; and 8) Sheridan – 44 habitat and 1 indirect habitat.

EXAMPLES OF 2009 HABITAT RELATED INFORMATION AND EDUCATION EFFORTS

News Release – July - Prescribed Burns - Habitat.
Wyoming Wildlife - July— “Frog Fever” article - aquatic (wetland) habitat.
WVN - Nov - Dec — “Getting to Know Game and Fish— Habitat and Access Branch”
Eight videos were produced (one for each region), on how habitat conditions could impact season setting proposals.
Teach 40 high school students about quality fish habitat and macroinvertebrates at the Game and Fish Youth Conservation Camp.
Radio, KTAK/KVOW Spot on Aquatic Habitat.
Wrote and Op-Ed on habitat needs for sensitive species for the Casper Journal.
WVN article on Russian olive and salt cedar work being conducted in the Cody region.
Coordinated several fish and wildlife educational exhibits including antler hunting, wildlife harassment and winter habitat at the annual Elk Fest celebration on the Jackson town square. It is estimated that well over 1,000 people attended the event.
Coordinated with the Casper Star Tribune to publicize a conservation easement and wildlife management plan being implemented on the Cottonwood Ranch with mitigation money from Oil and Gas companies.
Buffalo KBBS Interview – Importance of Wildlife Habitat Management Areas.
Media Tour conducted by the Regional Information and Education Supervisor to address habitat issues and actions for media from southeast Wyoming. During this tour media representatives from Wyoming Public Radio, The Rawlins Daily Times, The Laramie Boomerang and the Cheyenne Tribune-Eagle were taken to several stops west of Laramie and in the Platte Valley. At these stops local WGFD personnel discussed the ongoing bark beetle epidemic and likely impacts to aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, the importance and condition of big game winter range, the need for adequate consideration of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat when planning subdivisions, energy development and other human actions, the WGFD Mule Deer Initiative and efforts in southeast Wyoming related to it and work being conducted by the Laramie Fish Management crew and others in the Encampment and Platte River watersheds. This tour resulted in air time on Wyoming Public Radio and articles in all three papers including front page coverage in the Rawlins paper

WYOMING LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

In 2009, the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI), working with the partners, continued developing a long-term science based effort to assess and enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitats at a landscape scale in Southwest Wyoming, while facilitating responsible development through local collaboration and partnerships. The WLCI also expanded its border to include all of Carbon County. The WGFD Coordination Team member position has been filled by Jim Wasseen. Numerous coordination meetings, field trips, and work sessions occurred (over 8 Local Project Development Team (LPDT) meetings alone) to develop projects and identify LPDT priorities. WLCI coordination team members met with NGOs, permittees, landowners, other agencies and entities to coordinate WLCI activities. Beginning in late 2009, WLCI started addressing a Conservation Plan that will incorporate LPDT areas of concern and the issues involved with those areas. The Conservation Plan should serve as a guide to all whom are involved with WLCI to address ecological functions throughout the WLCI area. This is a shift away from shelf ready projects to projects that are more encompassing, and at a landscape level. The WLCI helped fund 20 projects in 2009; a number of these are multi-year projects that began prior to 2009.

WLCI projects within a WGFD region are more fully described in the regional sections of this report. WLCI partnered with WGFD on projects involving conservation easements, WHMA improvements, wildlife friendly fencing, and a wildlife underpass among other projects. In cooperation with the USFWS Partners Program, six stream enhancement actions were completed in 2009.

WLCI area-wide projects include the following programs; Wyoming Basins Native Plant Development: This program is targeting the development of native forbs found by WAFWA to be of conservation benefit to sage grouse and other wildlife species inhabiting sagebrush ecosystems in SW Wyoming. Development of this program will take years, but the current “Seed for Success” program is providing the necessary tools to make this program work and has started with the collection of 16 native species’ seeds in 2009. Funding supports propagation efforts at the NRCS Meeker, CO and Bridger, MT Plant Materials Centers. Current partnerships include NRCS, Wind River Seed, WY Working Groups, NPS, USFS, BLM, and NRCS. The WLCI provided \$30,000 to aid in funding this project; Special Status Plant Species Monitor and Inventory: This program is a long-term multi-year funded, on-going project to properly identify the rarity of species, essential to determine the amount of protection, or type of conservation action needed. WLCI contributed \$40,000 in partnership with Wyoming Natural Diversity Database and University of Wyoming (UW); and Science Integration, Data and Information Sharing: This program includes evaluating the effectiveness of habitat treatments, assessing cumulative effects of development on habitats, coordinating work and working to integrate science into on-the-ground actions. Studies occurring involve identifying pygmy rabbit habitat requirements, developing spatial models to assess sage-grouse responses across the landscape, and identifying and prioritizing migration routes for big game. On-going data management activities include developing a data management framework and clearing house, and providing public access to the information. In 2009, WLCI has been improving its website and providing updates on a regular basis. The website can be accessed at www.wlci.gov.

LANDS ADMINISTRATION

The Lands Administration Branch is tasked with addressing the Department’s property rights objectives for habitat conservation, permanent public access, and property rights monitoring. Property rights monitoring is an essential function of Lands Administration. Attempts are made to monitor all conservation easements, and other property rights held by the Commission. Habitat and Access Specialists, Game Wardens, Biologists, and other field personnel often assist with monitoring. Development and implementation of a formal set of monitoring protocols and procedures is an objective of Lands Administration staff. Branch personnel continued to work on a variety of habitat related projects around the state pursuant to the goals and objectives of Department regulations, Commission policies, the Strategic Habitat Plan, and other administrative directives. Commission approved acquisitions of several properties and conservation easements were among the Branch’s major accomplishments.

Conservation Easement Funding - Interest in conservation easements continues to grow in the state. Landowners are reaping the financial benefits of either donating or selling easements while safeguarding the agricultural character of their lands. Whether donating easements for income tax purposes, or selling for fiscal reasons, landowners are conserving some extremely high quality wildlife habitat throughout the state. Positioned around the state are several organizations highly qualified to acquire and administer conservation easements. Lands Administration works with many of these organizations to achieve mutually desired conservation goals.

Funding opportunities for conservation easements remained adequate during the past year. The WWNRT and the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) continued to be reliable funding sources. Easement funding was also greatly aided by relatively new associations of state, federal, and local entities formed to enhance habitat in western Wyoming.

The Jonah Interagency Mitigation and Reclamation Office (JIO) and the WLCI greatly aided conservation easement acquisitions. Other important partners like the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition (WGBGLC), administered by the Wildlife Heritage Foundation of Wyoming (WHFW), and the Department's Habitat Trust Fund continued their unwavering financial support of conservation easements.

Several conservation easements with Department ties received support from two non-traditional, highly competitive sources. The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation provided funds for two easements now held by the Department, and for a third being administered by the Department for subsequent administration by a third party. In addition, due to Department efforts, Acres for America granted awards for two easements in the state. The Acres for America fund is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation with funds provided by the Wal Mart Corporation to help mitigate lands encumbered with their facilities throughout the county.

The WGFC continued to demonstrate support for conservation easements and other property rights projects. The Commission helped to bridge funding gaps for several easements, including several which are held by other organizations.

Conservation Easements

With the assistance of a supportive Commission and Administration, the Services Division has developed an active conservation easement program. Throughout the year, landowners continued to contact the Department to discuss conservation easement options. Most landowner contacts are directly related to the increased awareness of the program by field personnel. Landowner relationships fostered by Aquatic and Terrestrial habitat biologists, wildlife biologists, game wardens, and Habitat and Access specialists have greatly enhanced easement opportunities.

Currant Creek Conservation Easement (Goal 1) - Kerry Olson

Approximately 2031 acres of private lands are included in the recently completed Currant Creek Cattle Company conservation easement project. Currant Creek landowners have made tremendous improvements to the riparian areas throughout the ranch with a mix of grazing management and beaver releases. The easement is among the first acquired by the Department that primarily benefits Species of Greatest Conservation Need as identified in the Statewide Action Plan. Among these are midget faded rattlesnakes, pygmy rabbits, and Colorado River cutthroat trout. The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, with its emphasis on funding for sensitive species conservation, contributed funds to the project. Also conserved are habitats associated with mule deer, elk, pronghorn, and others.

Flying Diamond Ranch Conservation Easement (Goal 1) - Kerry Olson

The Department continued its association with the Mellon family by accepting their donation of a conservation easement on the Flying Diamond Ranch. This follows the 2007 donation of the Riverbend Ranch easement near Laramie. The Flying Diamond easement conserves 1,389 of private lands along the Encampment River south of Saratoga.

Diamond H Ranch Conservation Easement (Goal 1) - Kerry Olson

Lands owned and operated for generations by the McGinnis family near LaBarge are now included in the Department's conservation easement inventory (Figure 1, Table 1). Extremely high value wildlife habitat and important migration corridors are included within the Diamond H Ranch. The easement included 2,400 acres

- Clearly serve the public interest and be consistent with the grantee's mission.
- Comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws.
- Not jeopardize the grantee's tax-exempt status or status as a charitable organization under federal or state law.
- Not result in private inurement or confer impermissible private benefit.
- Be consistent with the conservation purpose(s) and intent of the easement.
- Be consistent with the documented intent of the donor, grantor and any direct funding source.
- Have a net beneficial or neutral effect on the relevant conservation values protected by the easement.

along LaBarge Creek in Lincoln County and near Coal Creek in Sublette County. The easement also placed extreme limits on the ability for expansion for a rural residential subdivision on adjacent lands.



Figure 1. Diamond H Ranch Conservation Easement.

Red Butte – Cook’s Mexican Creek Ranch Conservation Easement Amendment (Goal 1) - Kerry Olson

The Cook family’s contributions to the Mexican Creek-Red Butte-North Fork Ranch conservation easement complex (Figure 2) increased with an amendment that strengthened the original easement. The Cook amendment removed two permitted building sites from future development consideration. The action clearly met the requirements of accepted amendment principles. Conservation easements may be amended if they meet one of seven guiding amendment principles.



Figure 2. Mexican Creek, Red Butte, North Fork Ranch Conservation Easement Complex.

Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust Easement (Goal 1) - Kerry Olson

Services Division Administration and Lands Administration continue to provide fundraising and administrative leadership for a large scale conservation easement near Pinedale. The easement project has garnered support from a tremendous array of organizations. The WSGALT will eventually hold and monitor the easement.

Green River Valley Land Trust (Goal 1) - Kerry Olson

The Commission also provided funding for the Cross Lazy Two Ranch conservation easement near LaBarge by the Green River Valley Land Trust (GRVLT). The GRVLT has conserved thousands of acres of private lands in Sublette County, including some with extremely high wildlife and habitat values.

Jackson Hole Land Trust (Goal 1) - Kerry Olson

Landowners near Torrey and Ring Lakes contacted the Department several years ago to discuss conservation easement options. Around that time, The Jackson Hole Land Trust (JHLT) opened their Wind River Initiative office in Dubois. The JHLT wanted to be part of the project, since they felt the high quality easements would help establish their presence in the area. Eventually JHLT took the lead role in negotiating and acquiring easements in the area. Their ability to



Figure 3. Torrey Lake Conservation Easement.

acquire two easements on Ring and Torrey Lakes was greatly enhanced by significant cash donations from the Commission. JHLT continues to provide much needed assistance to Dubois area landowners.

Wakeley Access Road (Goal 1) - Kerry Olson

A small, but highly significant acquisition of lands near Thermopolis insures continued public fishing access to the Bighorn River. Recent survey work revealed a gap in the access road from the public highway to the popular stretch of the river. With funding assistance provided by TU, the gap was purchased by the Commission. A summary of information and action on the WGFC conservation easement program are included in Table 1.

Table 1. Conservation easements administered by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Easement	Date	Acres	Acquired	Comments
Billy Miles	1996	787	Exchange	Seasonal access to 4301 acres of private lands acquired
Breteche Creek	2003	715	Purchase	Federal highway mitigation funds
Currant Creek	2009	2031	Purchase	Unique area with multiple SGCN
Deer Creek	2001	299	Donation	Donated with Flying S – adjacent to Pennock Mtn.
Diamond H Ranch	2009	2400	Purchase	Quality habitat and halted progress of a subdivision
Flying A Ranch	2008	2840	Purchase	Public access for licensed hunters included
Flying Diamond	2009	1389	Donation	Second donation by Mellon after Riverbend
Flying S	2001	1048	Donation	Donated with Deer Creek by Shiley
Laramie Peak	1988	5329	Exchange	Development rights retained after exchange with Vale
Medicine Lodge	2006	209	Retained in Sale	Public access also retained after sale to Alm
Mexican Creek	1989	2192	Purchase	Public access included
North Fork Ranch	2007	1409	Purchase	Adjacent to Mexican Ck and Red Butte CE's
Red Butte – Cook	2007	679	Donation	Amended 2009 to eliminate two building envelopes
Red Butte – Cook 2	2007	10	Donation	Second donation by Cook
Red Butte - Krall	2007	121	Donation	Donated without additional building envelopes
Red Butte - Kallgren	2007	14	Donation	Acquired by Cook in 2009
Red Butte - Paulson	2007	143	Donation	High value mule deer habitat
Red Butte - Welch	2007	37	Donation	Unique area along North Popo Agie
Red Butte – W F	2008	10	Donation	Helped tie together Red Butte CE's
Red Butte - Hansen	2008	77	Donation	Donation by owners of the North Fork Ranch CE
Riverbend	2007	5760	Donation	Quality riparian habitat included in donation
21 CE's		27,499		Field personnel directly responsible for most CE's