



November 2015

the wyoming game and fish department

# CODY REGION newsletter

## An honor

### Veteran hunter asks Cody office to fly flag

The Cody Game and Fish office received an unusual request last month from a hunter. Craig Hert of Jacksonville, Florida visited the office and asked Game and Fish to fly the flag he received upon retiring from the Navy. Hert explained that upon retiring, veterans often commemorate their special occasion by flying their flag for a day over a U.S. Capitol building or other places near to their hearts in honor of their service. Hert, who visits Cody annually to hunt, chose the Cody Game and Fish office. The Cody office accepted this honor and on Oct. 30, his flag was raised and flown for the day.

Hert joined the Navy at 19 and has served for 20 years. Hert grew up in Cody and fondly remembers hunting with his family. "I grew up here and ever since I was little, I remember going hunting. It's just something I grew up with," he said. "No matter where I am, Cody is always home." Hert currently lives in Florida with his wife and two children.



Craig Hert's flag being raised over the Cody Region Game and Fish office.

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## On the ground

### Buffaloberry planted on Yellowtail

Last month, 2,500 two-year-old buffaloberry seedlings were planted on Yellowtail Habitat Management Area in an ongoing effort to increase quality habitat for wildlife.

Terrestrial Habitat Biologist Jerry Altermatt said seedlings were planted in areas of Yellowtail that had previously been treated for Russian olive and burned in a 2013 wildfire. “Buffaloberry, a native shrub that grows in riparian areas, provides a good food source and cover for wildlife,” Altermatt said. “Unlike Russian olive however, it is not invasive and does not form dense monocultures that outcompete other vegetation.”

A nine-member crew from Watershed Restoration Group planted the seedlings late in October. The young seedlings were dug by hand using hoedads, a tool used to plant trees and shrubs. Weed barrier and "tubex" tree shelters were placed around each plant to protect from browsing and moisture loss.



“The buffaloberry seedlings should be four feet high in three to four years, at which time the tree shelters will be removed,” Altermatt said. “Buffaloberry has declined on Yellowtail in recent years due to competition with Russian olive, mostly from shading, and mortality caused from a wildfire that burned 1,500 acres of riparian area in 2013.”

The project, part of a larger wildfire restoration effort including noxious weed control and re-seeding, was funded by the National Wild Turkey Federation, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department Trust Fund. “More plantings are planned for the future,” Altermatt said.

## Hunting season and check stations

Game and Fish personnel have been busy conducting field checks and manning check stations on the east side of the Bighorn Basin. From October 15-17, four check stations were operated in Shell, Hyattville, Ten Sleep and Lovell. Considering very mild temperatures, overall, deer hunters had better than expected hunting success south of Ten Sleep. Pronghorn hunters reported fair to good success, but some indicated a lack of big bucks. Backcountry elk hunters had good success the first few days of October in the Meeteetse area but most other elk areas saw only fair hunting due to the extreme mild conditions.



**A happy hunter with the deer he checked in at the Lovell check station Oct. 16.**



**Greybull Area Biologist Leslie Schreiber records harvest data while CWD Technician Cullen Hardy collects a sample for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing.**



**Damage Technician Gary Mizer collects a sample for CWD testing while Worland Biologist Bart Kroger checks a hunter's license.**



**Regional Wildlife Supervisor Alan Osterland talks to a hunter at the Ten Sleep check station.**

## In the water

### Bighorn River sampling



Fisheries Biologist Joe Skorupski notches a fin of a trout from the Bighorn River. The notch identifies the fish if captured on subsequent passes.



Regional AIS Specialist Greg Mayton shows off a nice brown trout captured on the Bighorn River.

Cody Region fisheries crew conducted population sampling on the Bighorn River last month. Crews electrofished the river from the Wedding of the Waters to the 8<sup>th</sup> Street bridge in Thermopolis over a four day period. Many large brown and rainbow trout were captured and the population continues to thrive.

### Fish salvaged from canal

Members of the East Yellowstone Chapter of Trout Unlimited together with volunteers from Marathon Oil and local FFA students recently salvaged fish from area canals. A total of 2,163 trout were salvaged from the Garland, Willwood, Cody, Lakeview and Northfork canals after being drained for the winter. Trout Unlimited member and fish salvage organizer Bob Capron said that this has been an annual effort for over 20 years.



Trout Unlimited members and volunteers from Marathon Oil salvaged 420 trout from the Lakeview canal early in November.

## Behind the Badge

### Over limit

On opening morning of the deer season near Ten Sleep, Wildlife Biologist Bart Kroger observed a hunter shoot and kill three mule deer bucks. When confronted, the hunter claimed he only shot once, and thought he missed. Kroger knew better however and spent the next hour showing the hunter all three deer he had fatally shot. The hunter then spent the next two hours gutting and dragging each deer to the road, while Kroger advised why lying is a not the right thing to do. The hunter was cited by Ten Sleep Game Warden Tom Desomber for two over-limits.



Worland area Biologist Bart Kroger with three deer that were illegally harvested.

### Assessing damage to crops



In addition to law enforcement duties, game wardens assess damage caused by wildlife to standing crops on private land. In mid October, Greybull Game Warden Bill Robertson and Damage Technician Jeff Abplanalp spotlighted a portion of a ranch west of Burlington to assess and document damage. Approximately 130 deer were observed feeding on alfalfa and corn fields and over 200 deer were observed during a second survey. Landowners must allow access for hunting to be eligible for compensation.

## Of interest

### Bear spray give-away successful

With help from local sportsmen's groups, Wyoming Outdoorsmen and Yellowstone Country Bear Hunters Association, members of the Large Carnivore Section handed out 100 cans of bear spray in Cody prior to the fall hunting season. This is a great example of Wyoming sportsmen stepping up and successfully promoting bear awareness and safety while hunting in bear country.



Bear Wise Community Coordinator Dusty Lasseter handing out bear spray to hunters to increase awareness and promote human safety.