



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Sheridan Region

June 2016 Newsletter

Sheridan Region Gets New Regional Wildlife Supervisor



Craig Smith joined the Sheridan Region in May as the new Regional Wildlife Supervisor

Sheridan Region

Regional Wildlife Supervisor:

Craig Smith

Regional Fisheries Supervisor:

Paul Mavrakis

Office Managers:

Lori Roe

Kathy Boyles

Clerical Specialists:

Wendy Balkenbush

Stephanie Bomar

Game Wardens:

Dayton: Dustin Shorma

Sheridan: Bruce Scigliano

Buffalo: Jim Seeman

Kaycee: Grant Gerharter

N. Gillette: Vacant

S. Gillette: Dustin Kirsch

Moorcroft: J.D. Davis

Investigator: vacant

Damage Tech: Vacant

Public Information Specialist:

Bud Stewart

Wildlife Biologists :

Wildlife Management Coordinator:

Lynn Jahnke

Sheridan: Tim Thomas

Buffalo: Dan Thiele

Gillette: Erika Peckham

Terrestrial Habitat: Todd Caltrider

PLPW Program Coordinator:

Troy Tobiasson

Fish Biologists:

Bill Bradshaw

Andrew Nikirk

Aquatic Habitat: Travis Cundy

Habitat and Access Coordinator:

Seth Roseberry

Aquatic Invasive Species:

Mike Iconelli

Story Fish Hatchery:

Superintendent: Steve Diekema

Senior Fish Culturist: Brad Hughes

Culturist: Jennifer Meineke

Sheridan Bird Farm:

Supervisor: Darrell Meineke

Biologist: Nate Brown

Technician: Kurt Heiser

Craig Smith was promoted to the Sheridan Regional Wildlife Supervisor position in early May following the retirement of Joe Gilbert. Smith began his career as a game warden in the Sheridan Region patrolling Keyhole Reservoir in 1998. Smith worked across the state doing boating enforcement during the summers, hunting season enforcement during the falls and wildlife damage jobs in the winter for Game and Fish from 1998 until 2002 when he was promoted to the Wheatland Game Warden district.

After 10 years in Wheatland, Smith transferred to the South Cody district in the fall of 2012 where he was fortunate to patrol some of the most remote and wild country left in the United States. Smith said "For me, as a game warden, South Cody was always the pinnacle. To be able to use my horses and mules to work in such beautiful country and to immerse myself in such a wildlife rich area was an honor." Smith said some of his game warden peers questioned his sanity when he chose to leave the blue skies and high country office he held, but he has always sought a higher purpose. "I chose to accept the Regional Wildlife Supervisor position in Sheridan because I saw an opportunity to help mentor and mold the next generation of wildlife managers in Wyoming."

Smith was raised in Laramie, graduated from Laramie High School in 1988 and received a BS in Fisheries and Wildlife Management from Utah State University in 1996. Craig and his wife, Lisa, are honored to be working in the Sheridan community and are looking forward to fishing, hunting and recreating in such a beautiful place.



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PRECorp Moves Ferruginous Hawk Nest In Short Order

Within minutes a nest platform is constructed from power line materials, see the three photos below.



On May 22, 2016, Tracy Jones, Manager of Land & Environmental Services for Powder River Energy Corporation (PRECorp) received a call from their line crew in Moorcroft indicating a raptor nest had caused a power outage and could potentially cause a fire that could burn down the power pole. Jones contacted a Special Agent with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and received authorization to move the nest and the four eggs to a platform PRECorp would construct a short, but safe, distance from the power pole.

The next day at noon, Jones, the line crew, and Game and Fish Gillette Wildlife Biologist Erika Peckham met to plan the nest move strategy. Within an hour the nest move plans, including associated safety concerns, were in place. The crew arrived at a staging area about 1/2 mile west of the nest site at 1:20 p.m. It took the line crew about 15 minutes to construct the nesting platform from ordinary materials used in power line construction: a 40' pole, wooden cross arms, a wooden spool-reel end and a few bolts and lag screws. At 1:38 p.m. the equipment necessary to move the nest started moving toward the nest site, and at 1:40 p.m. the adult birds (now verified as Ferruginous Hawks) flew from the nest. At 1:45 p.m. PRECorp Line Foreman Jeff Pillow elevated himself in the bucket truck to collect the eggs and clear the nest from the structure. When Pillow approached the nest, he observed three hatchlings and one egg in the nest. The three downy chicks and egg were placed into the prepared transportation unit and the nest material was pushed to the ground where it was gathered and carried to the new platform site. The nest materials were secured down to the platform and the hatchlings and egg were transferred to the new nest at 1:57 p.m. The area was cleaned up and vehicles were prepared for exit. During the exit, the adult birds were observed landing on the new nest structure at 2:02 p.m. Later, from a distant vantage point, Jones and Peckham verified the adults were attending their young birds.



Gillette Wildlife Biologist Erika Peckham secures nest material to the newly constructed nest platform.



With the new nest platform in place the Ferruginous Hawk chicks are lifted up to their new nest.



The Ferruginous Hawk chicks in their new nest.



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Rozet & Moorcroft Schools Enjoy Outdoor Days at Keyhole

Moorcroft Game Warden John Davis, Sheridan Region Public Information Specialist Bud Stewart and Keyhole State Park employee Andrea Foster hosted school kids from Rozet and Moorcroft at Keyhole May 23 – 25 teaching them about Wyoming mammals, watercraft safety, and how to use teamwork in a canoe. There were 39 sixth graders from Rozet, 42 eighth graders and 37 sixth graders from Moorcroft during the three day period. The kids had fun even though the water was cold according to the few who got wet.



Moorcroft Game Warden John Davis announces the start of a canoeing exercise for Rozet 6th graders.



The canoe exercise required participants to get into their canoe, back it out from shore, turn around and paddle to a buoy and return.

Story Fish Hatchery Busy in May



Several members of the public showed up to observe the spawning operation where milt from wild Yellowstone Cutthroat males was used to fertilize the eggs of Yellowstone Cutthroat females kept in captivity.



Fertilized trout eggs in a transportation cooler.

The Eagle Lake rainbow trout spawning operation at Story Fish Hatchery ended in May with 2.3 million eggs being collected this spring. During May, 1.4 million eyed Eagle Lake rainbow trout eggs were shipped to Tensleep, Speas and Dubois Fish Hatcheries in Wyoming, Bellvue-Watson and Mt. Shavano in Colorado, Whiterocks Hatchery in Utah, and the Wolf Creek Hatchery in Kentucky.

The hormone OvaRH was administered to Story's Yellowstone cutthroat trout females to assure egg ripening would coincide with the collection of milt from wild Yellowstone cutthroat males in Yellowstone Park. The female Yellowstone cutthroat were transported to Cody where the eggs were stripped and fertilized with the milt from the wild males thus completing the infusion of wild genetic material into the captive broodstock.



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That's a Ton of Pheasant Eggs

Well, not quite a ton, but very close at 1, 969 pounds. That is what 21,000 pheasant eggs weigh averaging 1.5 ounces each; and 21,000 is how many eggs the incubator at the Sheridan Bird Farm can hold at one time. The pheasant eggs are collected over several weeks, washed and stored in a large cooler. At predetermined times the eggs are removed from the cooler and placed on trays that hold 276 eggs each. The trays of eggs are placed in the incubator and 24 days later they hatch.



Trays of eggs wait to be placed into the incubator at the Sheridan Bird Farm.



Bird Farm Supervisor Darrell Meineke places a tray of pheasant eggs in the incubator (photo at right).

Fish Survey Catches Large Brown Trout in Lake DeSmet



While sampling Lake DeSmet in late May, the Sheridan Fish Management Crew caught a large brown trout in one of the gill nets. The brown measured 34 inches and quickly “bottomed out” the 20 pound scale the Crew had with them. The Fish Management Crew speculates the fish probably weighed close to the state record, which is 25 pounds 13 ounces. The fish quickly swam away when it was released back into the lake.

Sheridan Region Fish Management Biologist Bill Bradshaw gets ready to release the large brown trout sampled from Lake DeSmet in May.