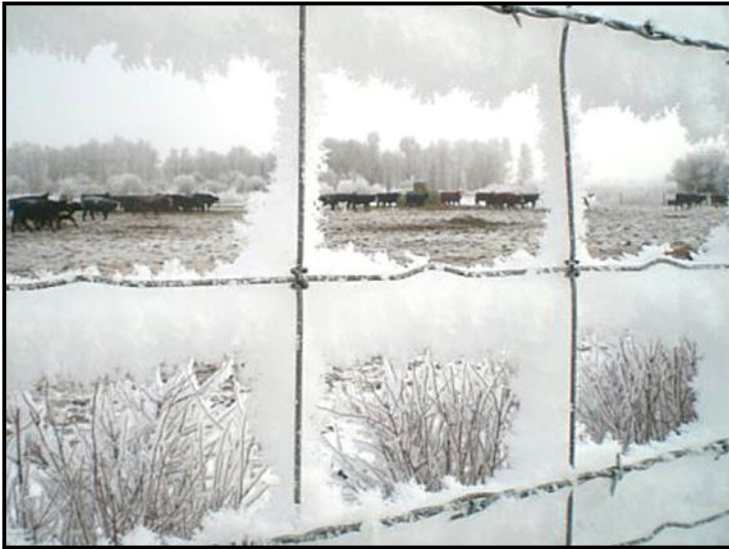


The Mountain Meadow



A quarterly publication from the Sublette County Conservation District

January 1, 2009



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"By working with local people who understand local problems, the best conservation measures can be accomplished."

A word from SCCD

The SCCD's election process

Conservation districts were originally formed to direct programs protecting local renewable natural resources. Wyoming now has 34 conservation districts in 23 counties.

Each conservation district is governed by a board of five supervisors. Supervisors are locally elected officials who serve without pay. By state statute three are rural, one is urban and one is designated as at-large. They are elected to be staggered four-year terms, with two positions available at a general election and three positions at the next general election. These staggered terms improve stability and consistency as supervisors may come from many different occupations and backgrounds. All supervisors must reside within the boundaries of their district and be residents of Wyoming.

Looking toward 2009 with 2 newly elected board members promises a future for even more "on the ground" conservation efforts!

Thank you Les and Craig!

On behalf of all the staff and members of board we would like to thank both Les Burrough and Craig Scharf for all their hard work and dedication over that past few years. Good luck with all your future endeavors and come see us again!

Thanks again
The SCCD staff and Board



2009 New Board Members

Welcome Dan and Chad!



Chad Espenscheid is currently a fourth generation owner/manager of Budd Ranches Inc. located in Big Piney, Wyoming. He was born and raised on this ranch and then obtained his B.S and M.S degrees in Water Resources/Civil Engineering at the University of Wyoming. In January 2009 Chad will begin his first term on the SCCD board.



Dan graduated from high school in Worland, Wyoming. After that, he attended college at Casper and then at the University of Wyoming where he obtained two degrees including a B.S. in Wildlife Management (1979) and a M. S. Degree in Range Management (1983). He worked seasonally during his college years for the U.S. Forest Service (timber inventory), Bureau of Land Management (wildlife biologist/technician) and the USDA High Plains Agricultural Research Station. Dan started work with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in 1983 in Yoder, Wyoming and in 1988 moved to Pinedale. Positions within the Wyoming Game and Fish Department included habitat biologist, oil and gas biologist and more recently a habitat mitigation biologist with the Jonah Interagency Office. His primary professional passion is working with agencies and other groups for the enhancement of wildlife habitats and planning/implementing on-the-ground projects. Hobbies include back-country horse use/packing, fishing and hunting, music and carpentry.

Don't Forget!!!!

The Green River Valley Cattlemen's meeting is on February 27th and 28th. There will be a banquet following the meeting on the 28th at Rendezvous Point. The Sundowners and Jesse Smith will be the evening's entertainment. *Tickets are \$35*

Call Kari Bousman at 307-537-5222 for tickets or information

What we've been up to

Windbreak workshop

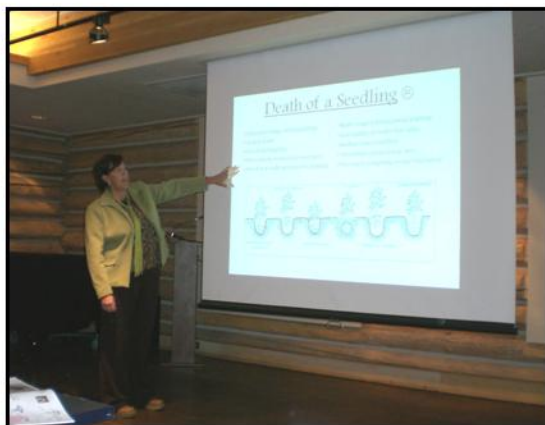
Each year the SCCD hosts a windbreak workshop for the public. The educational workshop includes information on the seedling tree program, design, installation and general tree care.

This year's event was held in October at the Sublette County Library in Pinedale. Attendees learned an understanding of soils and watering

techniques, opportunities using different drip irrigation components and about wildlife fencing, just to name a few. Presentations were given by SCCD tree sales coordinator, Sno Ann Enger and NRCS District Conservationist, Jennifer Hayward. Leslie Schroeder with NRCS's soil survey team did hands-on demonstrations showing different textures of soils and the different qualities of them. The public was also invited to bring some soil from their property to have Leslie take a look at.

Seedling tree orders are taken from mid-September thru mid-April. The SCCD, using technical assistance provided by the NRCS, is ready to help you design your tree planting, whether the purpose is to capture snow before it

blows your driveway shut or just to provide a noise barrier from a busy street. Planting a tree is always a good thing but doing it with a purpose is even better!



Above: Sno Ann Enger explains ways to kill your seedlings.

Left: Soil Scientist, Leslie Schroeder shows different soil types and what process is used to determine the differences.

What we've been up to

Wyoming state convention

Sublette County Conservation District staff and board chairman, Darrell Walker recently attended this year's Wyoming Association of Conservation District's Annual Convention held in Gillette.

Presentations included "Partners in Conservation" by Arlen Lancaster, Chief of the NRCS, "Restore New Mexico, bringing together partners for landscape level conservation" by Debbi Hughes, Executive Director of the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts, "Economic Impact of Coalbed Methane Production in Sheridan County" by Ken Kerns representing the Coalbed Natural Gas Alliance and Laura Sands of the Clark Group discussing climate change.



Also during the convention, informational sessions on many topics were conducted, including range monitoring, EPA watershed based planning, wild-life and natural resource issues, woody biomass concerns, subdivision reviews and status and efforts surrounding the sage grouse.

The Annual Convention provides an opportunity for your local conservation district to meet with other district employees and supervisors from across the state as well as state officials to share ideas and gain insight in regards to what other areas are experiencing and doing.



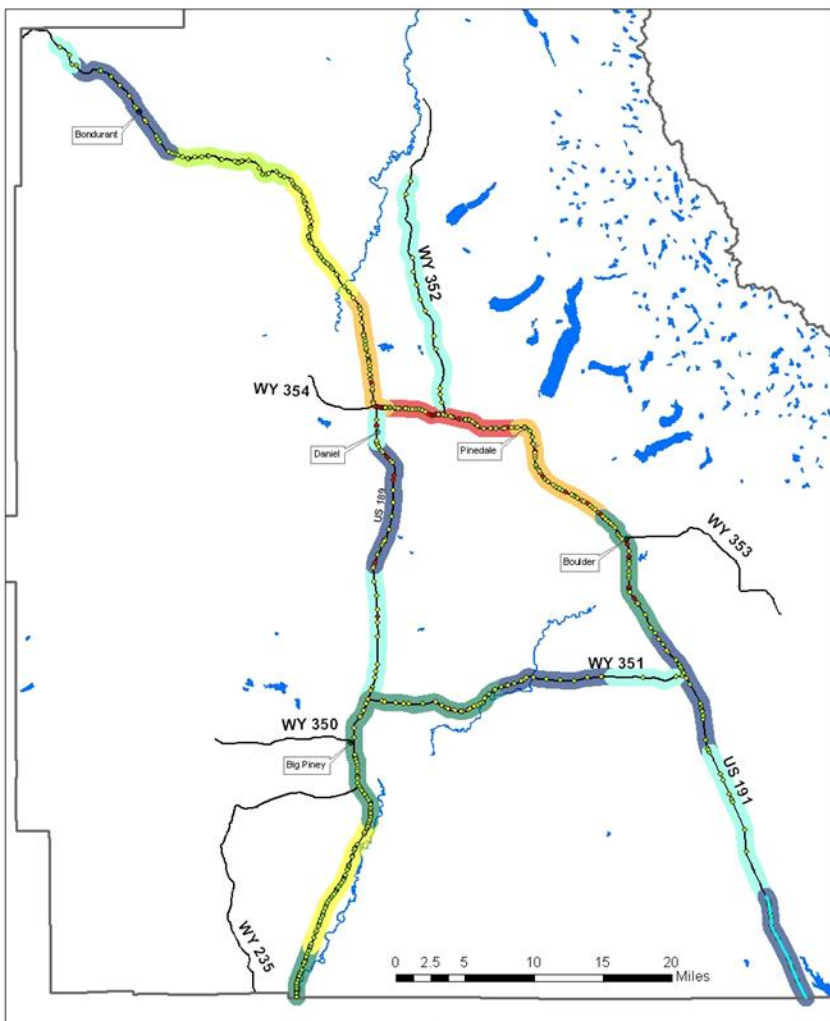
Wildlife carcass map

This year we have been diligently working on a carcass map with information gathered by the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT). This map is designed to help planners locate sections of our roads where animals are being impacted the most. The SCCD has been attending meetings where possible wildlife overpass(s) have been discussed. The map should be a useful tool in determining key areas where aid is needed.

The carcass pick-up information gathered by WYDOT includes 2002 through the first half of 2008 carcass data, the species of animal, age, sex and mile post it was found at. While it is known that this information is not completely accurate, it still shows where the problem areas are. It is widely assumed that the numbers recorded by WYDOT are a significantly low reflection of the actual number of collisions that take place every year in Sublette County.



WYDOT Wildlife Carcass Pick-up Locations 2002-2008



Legend

◆ 2007 Carcass Points	Number of Carcasses
◆ 2008 Carcass Points	0-25
◆ 2002-2006 Carcass Points	26-50
▭ County Boundary	51-100
— Main Roads	101-150
	151-200
	201-250
	351-400



Prepared by: Meghann Durbrow
Sublette County Conservation District
Pinedale, WY

What we've been up to

Sand Springs Draw Tour

On November 25th the SCCD Natural Resources staff hosted a tour of the Sand Springs and Alkali Draw areas to discuss potential projects to protect these watersheds. A diverse group from the community attended, including the Game and Fish, BLM, ranchers holding grazing permits in the area, WLCI, USFWS, DEQ and others. The tour was designed to be a brainstorming workshop to identify problem areas and discuss possible solutions. These two watersheds run directly into the New Fork River and have the potential to deposit large amounts of sediment and/or pollutants to the river (See map).

The tour started on South Boulder Road, where the group stopped to look at the culverts running under the road. This seemed to be one place for concern, as the culverts were in need of repair, and did not appear to be large enough to handle the volume of a 100 year flood event. Upgrading the culverts could be an easy fix to alleviate possible road erosion in case of such a flood.

The tour also examined the confluence of the New Fork River and Alkali Draw. There was some evidence of erosion being deposited into the river. From the confluence the tour headed south to a stop near Anticline Disposal.

There was discussion about the gas field and new pads being proposed that would cross the draw. The thought of additional roads being placed across the draw was brought up as something to be watched in the future as a source of erosion. Enhancing vegetation in the upland was one thought tossed around as a way to keep water on the ground longer to help ease possible flooding and erosion.

The final stop of the day was at the Sand Springs Draw Industrial Site. It was observed that Sand Springs Draw has been channelized through the first part of the development; although further downstream it was in a more natural state.



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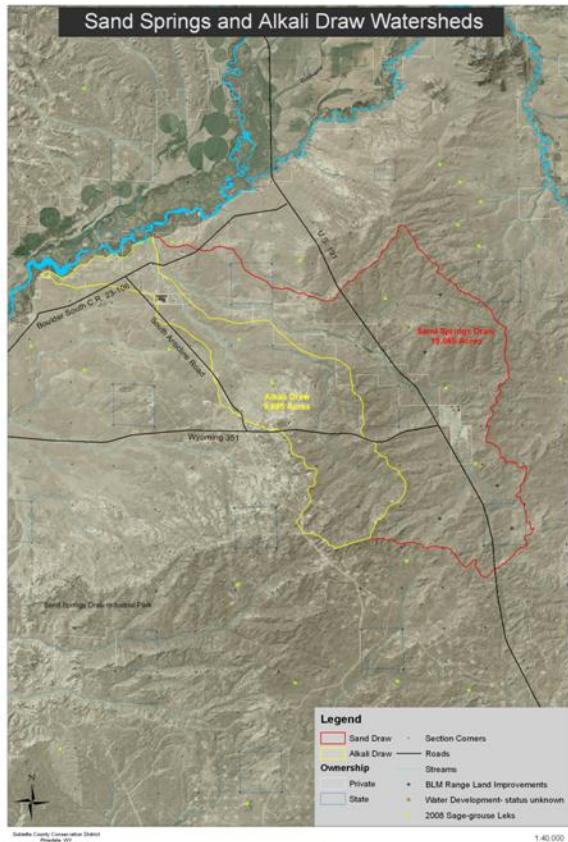
Participants noted development impacts occurring, some of which included weed infestation and erosion issues. With some work and planning, most of the problems can be mitigated or corrected. Although we cannot change the channelization of the draw, this will serve as a factor to think about for future development.

It looks as if new development in Sand Springs Draw is already heading in a good direction. The new section of development looks very promising with the draw channel being left in its natural state.

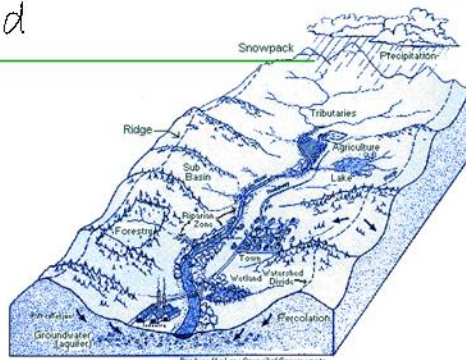
Some of the potential projects brought up were: to stabilize reservoirs that are pre-existing; create new reservoirs, both higher in the watershed to control the amount of water allowed to run through Sand Springs Draw Industrial site, and in Alkali Draw to help with settling of sediment;

and to plant more vegetation within the industrial site to aid in stabilization of the draw and to aid in filtration of pollutants. There is also the thought of looking into spreader dikes below the industrial site to help dissipate the flow of water.

More discussion will place before any projects are decided on and finalized. It was also noted that any projects that take place must take into consideration any cultural resources that might be in the area. The District is still seeking participation from outside sources on project ideas; please contact us if you think you have an idea that might be helpful. By having cooperation between agencies, private land owners and permittees we hope to create a project that will protect and enhance Sand Springs Draw, Alkali Draw and the New Fork River for generations to come.



What's a watershed



- A watershed is a catchment area that drains all the water from a geographically defined area through one outlet (drain) or outflow point such as a dam, stream or the mouth of a bay.
- Water sources found within a watershed include lakes, streams, reservoirs, wetlands and groundwater (which includes springs).
- Precipitation plays a major role in the amount of water flowing through a watershed because it supplies water to streams, that flow into lakes, reservoirs and ultimately into the ocean.
- A large watershed can contain several small watersheds. Within these smaller watershed are tributaries (streams, creeks or rivers that flow into other streams, creeks or rivers).
- Both human-induced and non-human activities upstream of the outflow point can affect water quality and quantity (stream flow) within the watershed.

The main watershed within Sublette County is the Green River which con-

The amount of water produced from 1" of rain covering an area.

Area (Acres)	Rainfall (inches)	Total Gallons	Cubic Feet	40 Gallon Baths
0.25	1	6,789	908	170
1	1	27,154	3,630	679
10	1	271,540	36,302	6,789
1000	1	27,154,000	3,360,218	678,850

tains smaller watersheds with tributaries such as the New Fork River, Pine Creek, Pole Creek, Boulder Creek and the Big and Little Sandy Rivers. The Hoback River watershed drains into the Snake River.

The Sublette County Conservation has been monitoring surface water in the upper Green River watershed since 2000.

A word from NRCS

Farm Bill Signups

Jennifer Hayward, District Conservationist

If you are interested in pursuing financial assistance through NRCS to implement conservation practices that relate to irrigation management, headgate replacement, range improvements, conversion to wildlife friendly fences, and other wildlife projects, please call soon, the deadline for signup was originally set for January 16, 2009. This may be pushed back but it's best to call and start discussions. If we haven't yet done a resource inventory and an estimated cost to construct, I might recommend applying for the next round of funding. There are many programs to choose from in the arsenal of options within the USDA.



The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is available again under the 2008 Farm Bill. GRP offers a few different types of easements that may be of interest to ranchers in the county. There is a perpetual option and also annual rental agreements that can last from 10-20 years. This program hasn't been offered since 2005 due to the program participation reaching the dollar cap set by Congress.

There are a few new programs that are on the horizon, that as of yet, we don't locally have a lot of information about. I imagine in the next year, we'll be able to visit about more opportunities.

If you have a wildlife project, there are tremendous opportunities to partner with other entities to get the project almost entirely funded by others. Your investment in these projects is your time and coordination.

On January 14, at 1:00, a USDA Local Work Group meeting will be held here in the office. This group serves as an advisory body to NRCS that will recommend the resource concerns that should be considered to be a priority in Sublette County. Never before have producers been allowed to be involved in that process. Now you can!

Did you know that over \$1,000,000 was brought into Sublette County through Farm Bill Programs?

Range Plant Spotlight

Sandberg Bluegrass

Karen J. Clause, Rangeland Management Specialist USDA-NRCS

Poa secunda

Plant Symbol = POSE

Sandberg bluegrass is a small, perennial cool season bunchgrass native to Sublette County. It occurs throughout Western North America, and is a complex of approximately 45 named species, 8 of which were recognized as distinct in 1935, including big bluegrass (*P. ampla*),



Canby's (*P. canbyi*), slender bluegrass (*P. gracillima*), alkali bluegrass (*P. junifolia*), Nevada bluegrass (*P. nevadensis*), Sandberg bluegrass (*P. sandbergii*), and pine bluegrass (*P. scabrella*). These species were all recently taxonomically combined into 1 species because their defining characteristics were unreliable. For instance, plant size, coloration, and leaf rolling could not be demonstrated under greenhouse conditions like they could under field conditions. Even though taxonomically combined, there are characteristics that distinguish these ecotypes in the field that are of management importance and warrant separation. The types most common to our area include big, Canby's, alkali, Nevada, and Sandberg.

Description: Sandberg bluegrass is most easily recognized by its short stature, early green up period, early flowering, and early dormancy. The leaves exhibit typical bluegrass characteristics, with boat-shaped tips, and "railroad tracks" or 2 grooves down the center of the leaf. The seed-head is a narrow "panicle" that spreads somewhat while flowering. It has a somewhat long "pointy", or acute, "ligule", which is a membranous tissue between the stem

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Sandberg Bluegrass

Continued from previous page

and the leaf where they join at the “collar”. It can be confused with mutton bluegrass (*P. fendleriana*), another common bluegrass in our native range uplands, but can be distinguished from mutton by its smaller stature, spikelets (individual florets) that are not compressed, and longer, more acute ligule.

Uses: Sandberg bluegrass is palatable forage for many classes of livestock and wildlife in the early spring, but due to its short stature and early dormancy does not provide much usable forage. However, Canby’s, Nevada, and big bluegrass ecotypes are typically better producers and can be important forage species that maintain their “green”, and hence palatability, into the summer months.

Season Species→	Cattle	Horses	Sheep	Elk	Deer	Antelope
Spring	D	D	D	D	D	D
Summer	U	U	U	U	U	U
Fall	U	U	U	U	U	U
Winter	U	U	U	U	U	U

P=Preferred; D=Desirable; U=Undesirable

Sandberg bluegrass is very useful as a minor component in the reclamation of native rangelands because of its dense fibrous root systems which are good at controlling soil erosion as well as deterring invasive species. It is adapted to a wide range of soil conditions, and withstands grazing pressure well. There are several cultivars and improved varieties of seed on the market, including ‘High Plains’ (Sandberg ecotype), ‘Canbar’ (Canby’s ecotype), and ‘Sherman’ (big ecotype).

Management: Sandberg bluegrass will withstand heavy grazing and trampling, and is considered an increaser with grazing pressure, and a pioneer, or early colonizer, species on disturbed sites. In a native rangeland situation, it should comprise a minor part of the plant community and management of grazing should be based on another species on the site with more limiting conditions.

References:

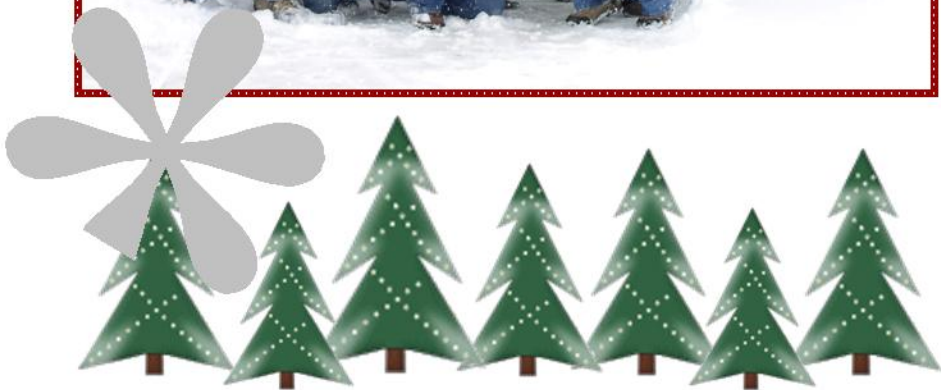
USDA-NRCS Montana State Office & National Plant Data Center

PLANTS database, <http://plants.usda.gov>

NRCS eFOTG, Ecological Site Descriptions

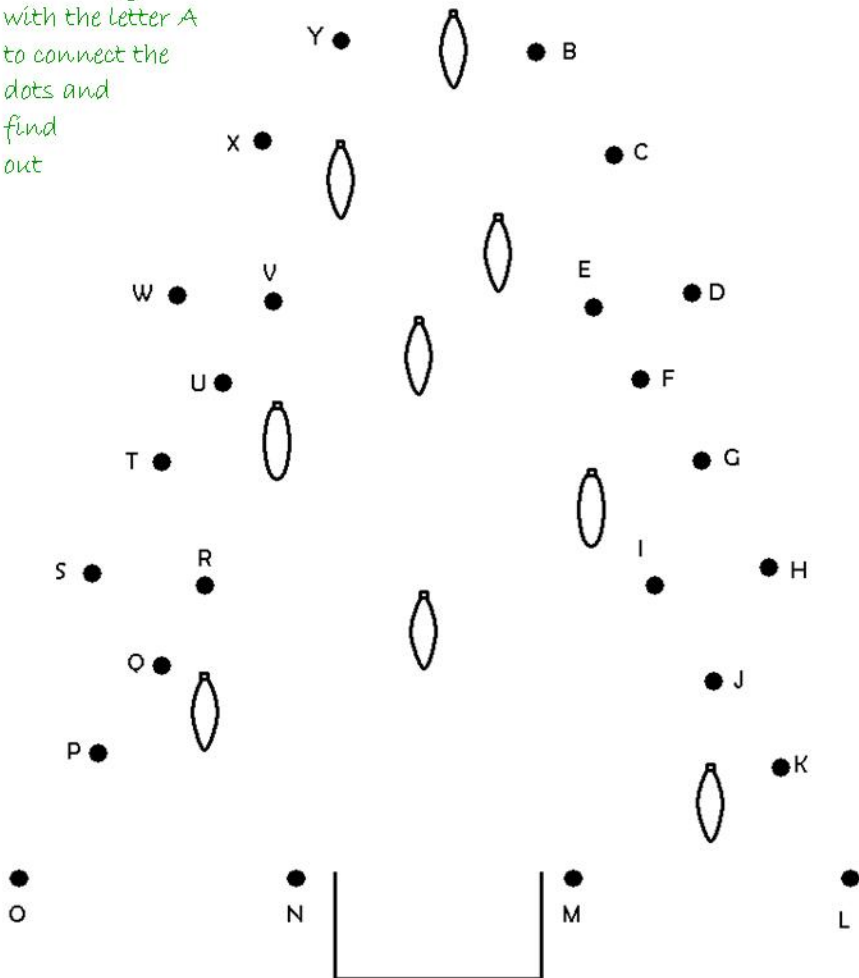
Karen J. Clause, Rangeland Management Specialist USDA-NRCS

Happy Holidays
From all of us, to all of you!



Kid's corner

What natural resource is found in homes during the holidays? Start with the letter A to connect the dots and find out



Who are we?

Sublette County Conservation District Board of Supervisors

Darrell Walker, Chairman
Brad Bousman, Vice Chairman
Colin Barney, Member
Dan Stroud, Member
Chad Espenscheid, Member

Sublette County Conservation District Associate Supervisors

Lee Shafer
Jim Bousman

Sublette County Conservation District Staff

Sno Ann Engler, Administrative District Coordinator
Kathy Raper, Surface Water Quality Specialist
Delsa Allen, Ground Water Quality Specialist
Melanie Purcell, Natural Resource Specialist
Meghann Durbrow, Air Quality Program/Field Technician

Partners: USDA / NRCS Staff

Jennifer Hayward, District Conservationist

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