



The

Quarterly Beet

Fall 2023 Edition

<https://www.washakiecd.com>

208 Shiloh Road
Worland, WY 82401



Calendar of Events

September

- 4- Labor Day, Office Closed for Holiday
- 9- Harvest Fest @ Pioneer Square
- 18- WCCD Board Meeting in Ten Sleep

October

- 6-7- Meet me at the Pumpkin Patch, A Local Producer Event 2190 S. Flat Rd Worland
- 7- Great Pumpkin Drop @ Fairgrounds & Oktoberfest
- 9- Columbus Day, Office Closed for Holiday

- 12- National Farmers Day

- 16- WCCD Board Meeting in Worland

November

- 10- Veterans Day, Office Closed for Holiday
- 11- Jay's High Tunnel Experiment Presentation @ Washakie County Extension Office, 9 am
- 15 to 17- WACD Annual Convention, Office Closed

- 20- WCCD Board Meeting in Ten Sleep

- 23- Thanksgiving, Office Closed for Holiday

December

- 2- Parade of Lights, Big Horn Ave.
- 18- WCCD Board Meeting in Worland
- 25- Christmas, Office Close for Holiday



Jay Richard to Share High Tunnel Experience

Specialty crop grower, Jay Richard installed a new high tunnel this year with partial match funds from the NRCS EQUIP program. Jay went big on this project! Nothing less could be expected for a high tunnel that would house giants pumpkins weighing 1000+ pounds! To give himself an extra edge and a few more weeks of growing time, the high tunnel was equipped with forced induction geothermal heat. If your curiosity is peaked and you want to know more please join us for a full presentation where Jay will detail his experience and results. The presentation will be rounded out with a Q&A segment. Please call the WCCD to register at 307-347-2456 ext 121. The presentation will be held at 1200 Culbertson Suite G in Worland at 9 am on November 11th.

FoodScape Spotlight

When James and Renelle Williams moved to Worland they set up shop for both their business (The Right Click MSP) and their home in an old church that had seen better days. Renelle went to work enriching the badly degraded soil by layering the ground with a thick mulch of leaves and compost. In the Spring, her first goal was to just get roots in the ground to help break up the compaction and add organic matter as deep as possible. (continued on page 2)



Artichoke in Bloom
Photo Credit J. Hofmann



Ananias Williams shows off his Giant Pumpkin! Seed courtesy of Jay Richard.



Renelle enjoys working with her children to create a space that produces both beauty and food. She's adept at identifying herbs for useful teas and edible flowers while still growing the more recognizable plants such as melons, squash and peppers. Every aspect of her plantings have a well thought out purpose. Tall-Fescue was chosen to seed the lawn because of its deep, drought resistant root structure and fast growing nature. The cut grass is used as a mulch around other plants to aid in water retention, topsoil creation and weed suppression, thereby reducing the need for herbicides.

One of the biggest setbacks the Williams family faced in their garden this year was herbicide contamination. Both came unexpectedly in the way of overspray from surrounding lots. Tomatoes, Elderberries and other annuals were impacted by the overspray. It's a good reminder to use herbicides sparingly and avoid application on windy days.

Renelle is happy to share her joy of growing with neighbors and passerby. If you are interested in growing more food as an addition to your landscaping stop by The Right Click to say hi and have a friendly conversation.



Before



After

A once barren ground now houses the family's calendula garden (a medicinal flower). Look close and you'll see artichokes hiding out as well!

Renelle demonstrates the difference between her home grown calendula (left) and mail order organic calendula (right).



Potatoes grown no-till fashion right under layers of straw. No digging needed!

Board Supervisor and District Manager Updates



Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation
Annual UTV Raffle
Donate \$25 for your chance to win

Only 800 tickets sold

1st Prize
2023 Polaris Mid 570SP

2nd Prize
Gas Grill

Support natural resource conservation with your tax-deductible donation. Your donation supports Foundation projects including stream and river restoration, forest health and tree planting, water quality and watershed protection, educational programs and more!

Special Thanks To:  

Drawing to be held November 14, 2023. Need not be present to win!

WNRF Raffle tickets can be purchased at WCCD. We have limited tickets available. Call 307-347-2456, Ext. 101.

Water Quality Monitoring to Commence in Spring 2024

WCCD was awarded WDEQ CWA Section 319 Funding for best management practice implementation and water quality monitoring. The last round of water monitoring concluded in 2018, with Nowater, Slick, Sage and Big Horn River being monitored for E. coli impairments. We will continue our monitoring at some of the same monitoring sites while adding additional sites upstream prior to urban and agriculture influences. Our goal is determine where to focus future funding opportunities with hopes to reduce impairments and improve the overall water quality of our streams and rivers within the county.

Part of the monitoring process requires a Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) be developed and approved through the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ). WCCD was awarded funding through Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) Water Quality Program for the development of the SAP. In addition to funding through WDA for the SAP Development, we also receive biennium funding for lab expenses, which will be used during FY2024 to purchase the necessary equipment and materials needed to complete the water quality monitoring.

WCCD Cost Share Programs

Have a project in mind to help improve natural resources on irrigated cropland, rangeland or even in your own backyard? We have the programs to help assist you financially. After all, our money is your money! WCCD receives 1 Mill Levy annually for funding of programs that will improve natural resources within Washakie County. For Fiscal Year 2024, we have added additional funding to some existing programs and are actively seeking projects from landowners, land managers and homeowners within Washakie County.

Our website (<https://www.washakiecd.com/cost-share.html>) lists all of our Cost Share Programs, but below is a brief description of some of our annual programs and what the cost share percentage is for each program:

Rural Cost Share Program is available for irrigated croplands, rangelands and other areas that are in need of improvements to maintain or improve natural resources that would provide a public benefit. This program offers 50% cost share, up to \$10,000. We currently have \$20,000 still remaining for this program in Fiscal Year 2024.

Rehabilitation Cost Share Program was introduced in Fiscal Year 2021 and provides cost share assistance to rehabilitate structures or practices that have proven successful, but may need repairs for improvement to continue to operate. This is not meant to be used for routine maintenance. This program offers 50% cost share, up to \$10,000. We currently have \$10,000 remaining for this program in Fiscal Year 2024.

Special Discretionary Cost Share Program is used to fill gaps from the above two programs and has two distinct pools of funding within its total allocated funding, \$5,000 for Urban projects that fall within Worland and Ten Sleep city limits (new program for FY2024), and \$5,000 for projects outside of city limits. This program offers 50% cost share, up to \$2,500. We currently have \$7,000 in funds still remaining for this program in Fiscal Year 2024.



Food Production, Procurement, Preparation and Preservation

Trash to Treasure: Composting Food to Create Soil

In the United States, food waste is estimated at between 30-40 percent of the food supply. This estimate which is based on estimates from USDA's Economic Research Service of 31 percent food loss at the retail and consumer levels, corresponded to approximately 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion worth of food in 2010. This amount of waste has far-reaching impacts on society:

- Wholesome food that could have helped feed families in need is sent to landfills.
- Land, water, labor, energy and other inputs are used in producing, processing, transporting, preparing, storing, and disposing of discarded food.

Source: <https://www.usda.gov/foodwaste/faqs> Accessed 9/11/23

WCCD offers a great tool to help mitigate food waste and putting your leaves and yard waste to good use while you produce dark, rich soil to be used for nurturing your landscape and adding nutrients back into the soil. Compost bins are available for sale through the Conservation District office for \$84. The bins have been tested locally and make it easy to turn the piles and keep the compost process active. Call 307-347-2456, Ext. 101 to place your order. Supplies are limited.

Compost Bin in action @ West Side Elementary



Canning Recipe

Home-Style Pickled Jalapeños

These long, pickled pepper strips are the perfect fit for tacos, nachos, or any favorite sandwich that needs spicing up. Recipe excerpted from *The All New Ball® Book of Canning and Preserving*, published by Oxmoor House (2016).

See full recipe here:

<https://www.ballmasonjars.com/blog?cid=home-style-pickled-jalapeños>

So Easy to Preserve!

Looking for reliable information on how to preserve that garden bounty? Check out resources at the following websites:

<https://nchfp.uga.edu>

<https://uwyoextension.org/uwnutrition/category/food-preservation/>

<https://www.ballmasonjars.com/canning-preserving-guides.html>

Winter Gardening Experiments



This winter a group of community volunteers will attempt to implement the practices explained by author Caleb Warnock from his book *Backyard Winter Gardening*. Participants will construct "hot boxes" filled with manure that will enable plants to produce in the winter. Follow us on Facebook to see updates!

Youth Education and Community Programs

Wyoming Boys School Students Learn Weed Management Techniques in the Worland Community Garden



Thank You Bryant Honey



Wyoming Boys School Tour

WCCD has hosted 12 educational events this summer with Wyoming Boys School.



Follow us on Facebook for upcoming announcements about Seedling Tree Sales.



WASHAKIE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT PICTURE FOR A PICTURE ANNUAL CALENDAR PHOTO CONTEST



Winner Receives:
A \$50 Gift Card to
Washakie Cinemas

Submissions accepted
September 1 - October 16th 2023

Email to wccd3@rtconnect.net
with Subject Title:
2024 Calendar Contest

Please include no more than 5 photos
in jpeg or png, photo release, your
name, phone number, and address in
the submission. Photos should be high
resolution 300 DPI & taken within
Washakie County.

CONTEST CATEGORIES

1. Conservation Practices
2. Close-Up Conservation
3. Conservation in Action
4. Agriculture & Conservation Across America



Open to Washakie County Residents

Your photo may be featured on our annual community calendar.
We reserve the right to enter your photos in the NACD Photo Contest.

WCCD is proud to champion the
Worland Community Garden
with Grant Writing Support.

WORLAND COMMUNITY GARDEN EXPANSION PROJECT

MEANS MORE PRODUCE, EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
& A BEAUTIFUL GATHERING PLACE FOR WORLAND!

Worland, WY –The Worland Community Garden will soon be able to expand the footprint of the garden due in part to a grant received from the LEK Endowment Fund at the Wyoming Community Foundation. Additional grant funds were previously obtained by the Wyoming Hunger Initiative. The City of Worland has made additional lands available for garden use and the Washakie County Conservation District has provided staff to administer the grant funds. The UW Washakie County Extension continues to support the Worland Community Garden by working in conjunction with the Grow A Little Extra Program .



NRCS & FSA Agency Updates

FSA Update

Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans require applicants to have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, see if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow. Information on your credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score:

- Make sure to pay bills on time
 - Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt
- Keep your credit card balances low
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your Washakie-Hot Springs County USDA Service Center at 307-347-2456 ext. 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Contact Information

Board of Supervisors

Daniel Greet, Chairman
Susan Pennington, Vice Chairwoman
Jaci Harkink, Secretary/Treasurer
Charley Orchard, Board Member
Keith Bower, Board Member



WCCD Employees

Amanda O'Keefe, District Manager EXT. 101
Janet Hofmann Education Coordinator EXT. 121
Ben Vega, Seasonal Outdoor Maintenance

NRCS Technical Support Staff

Emma Allen, District Conservationist EXT. 108
Allen Croft, Civil Engineer EXT. 122
Blaise Allen, Regional Rangeland Mgmt Specialist EXT. 109
Caleb Salzman, Rangeland Mgmt Specialist, EXT. 114
Kaile Brant, Soil Conservationist EXT. 119
Erick Hayes, Soil Conservationist EXT. 107

Call us at 307-347-2456 and enter the extension above.

USDA-NRCS UPDATE: High Tunnels Provide More Locally Grown Fresh Fruits, Veggies

It's hard to beat produce grown in the Big Horn Basin. It's often fresher and tastier, uses less energy for transport, and helps farmers in your community. But the off-season presents a big challenge for farmers who grow fruits and vegetables and for consumers who want to find local produce throughout the year.

When farmers can lengthen the growing season, even by several weeks, their options change. That's why the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service promotes seasonal high tunnel as such a powerful tool. High tunnels are plastic-wrapped, metal-framed structures that are fairly easy and inexpensive to build. They are designed to extend the growing season into the colder months, helping to increase the availability of local produce, keep plants at a steady temperature and even conserve water and energy.

High tunnels are similar to greenhouses, except they are considered "passively heated." That means they do not require electricity to heat – only sunlight. The plastic on the frame actually provides enough insulation to add up to 12 extra weeks to the growing season, depending on location. The inside of a high tunnel boasts its own microclimate, often producing crops of higher quality and quantity than those in traditional farm fields. High tunnels are also different than greenhouses in that the plants are actually in the ground, not in pots or on tables. You can think of it as a plastic covering over a field.

High tunnels can cut costs for the producer by conserving water and requiring fewer inputs, like fertilizers or pesticides. In high tunnels, these inputs are often applied through tubes that run along the base of the plants, allowing water and fertilizer to be delivered directly above the soil. Outside of high tunnels, these inputs are often dispersed on a larger scale and require more to ensure the plants receive an adequate amount.

NRCS helps farmers build high tunnels, providing technical expertise and funding. Local and regional markets often provide farmers with a higher share of the food dollar, and money spent at a local business often continues to circulate within community, creating a multiplier effect and providing greater economic benefits to the area.

For more information, contact your Washakie County USDA Service Center at 307-347-2456 or visit nrcs.usda.gov.