

UINTA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
P.O. Box 370, 204 East Sage Street  
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(307) 787-3070

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Permit No. 11

CHANGE OF SERVICE REQUESTED



## Projects Continue to Improve the Bear River

About 20 years ago, the Bear River, from the confluence of Sulphur Creek to Woodruff Narrows Reservoir, was determined not to be supporting its designated uses for “cold water fishery and aquatic life other than fish” due to excess sediment in the river. The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) added this segment of the Bear River to their 303(d) list of impaired waters in 2002. The Uinta County Conservation District, with the help of a steering committee made up of local people that use the Bear River watershed, authored the Upper Bear River Watershed Management Plan in 2005. This plan identified Best Management Practices for improving water quality, including practices to reduce streambank erosion. The Bear River Sediment TMDL written in 2014 estimated that instream erosion within the impaired reach of the Bear River accounts for 77% of the total sediment load. Some of this instability is exacerbated by irrigation push-up dams; irrigation points of diversion where water levels are raised by gravel-cobble dams that are annually maintained with heavy equipment.

One example of this is the Morris Brothers Ditch Diversion that supplies water to the Town of Bear River and one other landowner. Every year, heavy equipment is used to push up rocks in the river to create a dam that raises the water level high enough to divert water down the ditch. The annual washout and construction of the push-up dam directly introduces suspended solids into the river. These push-up dams also promote stream instability above and below the dam, reduce fish habitat and create barriers to upstream fish passage. By redesigning this irrigation diversion based on natural channel design principles, all of these concerns will be addressed and ultimately eliminated.

One very important goal of this project and all projects UCCD is involved in, is to demonstrate that these natural resource concerns can be addressed while still providing irrigation water, the lifeblood of the area’s agriculture.

Construction of this project is planned to begin this fall and completed by the end of next year, if not sooner.



*This is a picture of the current push-up dam that stretches all the way across the Bear River.*

Stream work is no small undertaking! These projects can take several years from the time initial discussions with landowners and water users take place until actual construction begins. Coordination with local landowners is key to the success of these projects and we appreciate their willingness to work with the Conservation District and other partners to get them done. Another critical element of these projects is the engineering and financial assistance that is needed. UCCD appreciates our partnership with many organizations and agencies that provide that assistance. The following agencies provided much needed financial and technical assistance for the Morris Brothers Ditch Diversion:

Town of Bear River	Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality 319 program
USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife	Wyoming Game and Fish
Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust	Trout Unlimited

This is just one of several projects on the Bear River aimed at improving water quality, fish passage, and habitat within the watershed. Feel free to contact UCCD for more information about work being done or planned to improve the Bear River.

VISIT US ON THE WEB! [WWW.UINTACOUNTYCD.COM](http://WWW.UINTACOUNTYCD.COM)

### Join us for the SW Wyoming **WILDFLOWER** **Virtual Tour**



Each week during the summer, UCCD highlights at least one plant native to our area. These highlights are posted on our Facebook/Instagram pages and on our website.

In addition, we want **YOU** to send pictures of the wildflowers from SW Wyoming and adjacent Uinta Mountains that you would like to know more about.

Email pictures to [klott.uccd@gmail.com](mailto:klott.uccd@gmail.com)

Visit the wildflower page on our website:

[www.uintacountycd.com/wildflowers](http://www.uintacountycd.com/wildflowers)



UintaCountyCD



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### Uinta County Conservation District

Kelly Guild, Chairman  
Dennis Cornelison, Vice Chairman  
Spencer Eyre, Secretary/Treasurer  
Kevin Condos, Member  
Shaun Sims, Member  
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# UCCD Assists Landowners with Water Development Projects

Water sources on Wyoming's rangelands can be few and far between, especially on a dry year. Studies have shown that the distance cattle must travel to find water does influence grazing distribution and utilization rates. Developing water sources in areas that don't have water readily available attracts livestock and wildlife to those areas for better grazing distribution and utilization. This spring, UCCD has assisted with several water development projects using funding received from the Wyoming Water Development Commissions Small Water Program as well as local funding through the Conservation Districts cost share program. These projects are now providing much needed water to wildlife and livestock while also improving range and soil conditions in those areas.

The project pictured here included the installation of a solar pump system on an existing well, directing the water into three new rubber tire water tanks. This system replaced a small stock water pond and deteriorating troughs that were difficult for livestock and wildlife to use.

For more information about funding for water development projects, please contact UCCD.



**CANCELED**

## Soil Health Day

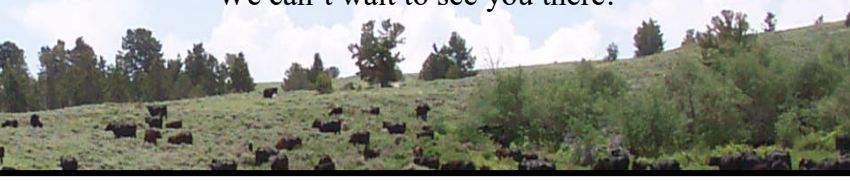
Due to concerns around the COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2020 Uinta County Soil Health Day has been canceled.

We are tentatively planning to host the next Soil Health Day on **September 8th & 9th, 2021.**

Many of the great speakers and sponsors we had lined up this year have already agreed to present at and contribute to the 2021 Soil Health Day.

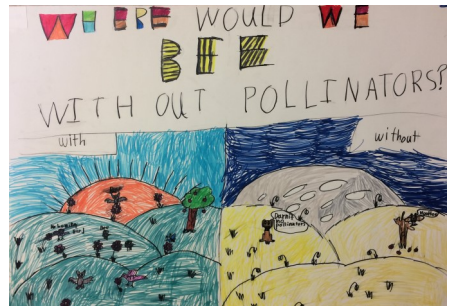
Look forward to hearing from expert Jim Gerrish on Management Intensive Grazing, as well as soil lab experts, NRCS Specialists and local ranchers.

We can't wait to see you there!



## Congratulations to our poster contest participants!!

Nine participants placed in their categories and won cash prizes. The two first place posters will advance to the state contest in October. UCCD congratulates each participant for a job well done. We will host the poster contest again next spring. To view all posters please visit our website at [uintacountycd.com/poster-contest](http://uintacountycd.com/poster-contest)



1st place 2nd-3rd Grade - Isaac Williams



## Glowing Sagebrush!

The diversity of elevation, precipitation, soils, and plant communities within Uinta county are such that multiple different species of sagebrush can be found within our county. The most dominant is Big Sagebrush, which includes two distinct types that can be identified as separate from each other: Wyoming Sagebrush and Mountain Sagebrush. Some of the following criteria can help you tell the difference between the two.

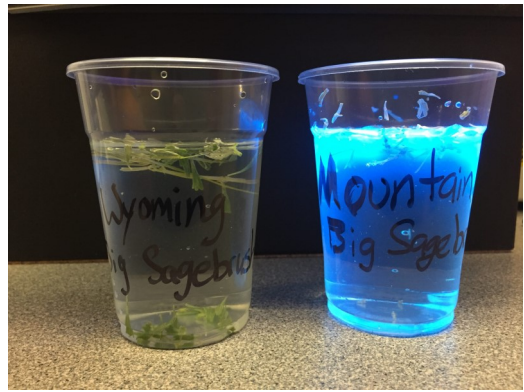
The first is location; Mountain big sagebrush is found in the mountains, in mountain meadows and on slopes. Wyoming big sagebrush is found in our valleys, deserts, *and* mountains but always in dry areas.

While differences in leaf shape can be noticed (Wyoming big sagebrush can have a longer middle lobe in the leaf and Mountain big sagebrush leaves can be longer), one sure way to determine which type of sagebrush you have is the black light test.


Mountain big sagebrush has high levels of coumarin, which fluoresces bright blue under a black light, while Wyoming big sagebrush does not.

Simply take the leaves of your chosen specimen and crush them into a cup or bowl of water until the juices from the plant spread into the water. Then, place the solution under a black light. If the water fluoresces bright blue, you have Mountain big sagebrush. If the water remains unchanged, then you have Wyoming big sagebrush.


A third type of Big Sagebrush is Basin big sagebrush, which grows typically in better soils — along ditches or next to rivers. It is characterized by its large size, especially in comparison to the two mentioned before. It is typically found to be 5-7 feet tall, while Mountain big sagebrush and Wyoming big sagebrush typically measure anywhere from 2-4 feet tall.




Crushed leaves of Wyoming big sagebrush do not fluoresce, whereas, crushed leaves of Mountain big sagebrush do fluoresce under a black light.



Typical habitat of Wyoming big sagebrush



Typical habitat of Mountain big sagebrush



Typical habitat of Basin big sagebrush