



Sheridan  
Community  
LAND TRUST  
Spring 2022



See what your kindness has grown in Sheridan County!

**2** Helping wildlife  
move easier

**4** Grind gravel for  
views that speak  
to your soul

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people & history



## Making fences friendlier for wildlife movement

Working lands and abundant wildlife make Sheridan County an amazing place. Cows, horses, moose, elk, deer, pronghorn and many birds can be found all over the county. Fences are important to keeping working lands working and certain areas need to exclude wildlife, such as haystacks, corrals, and doctoring areas.

However, many areas of working lands provide important habitat for livestock and wildlife alike. Fences in these areas can be constructed in a way that contains livestock while also allowing easier wildlife movement, reducing wildlife entrapment, and reducing fence maintenance of fixing breaks.

Using wildlife movement patterns from local observations and the North Bighorn Mule Deer Movement Study, SCLT is working with landowners and land managers to modify, remove or rebuild fencing in key areas to enhance wildlife passage while protecting functionality for livestock and decreasing fence maintenance. This type of fence design is referred to as wildlife friendly fencing, though it is also friendly to agricultural use of the property.

### What is wildlife friendly fencing?

Wildlife fencing is fencing that achieves its purpose - whether that be containing livestock or denoting a

boundary - while still allowing for wildlife passage. It can take many forms, but the basic guidelines for pastures with cattle are to have the fence be no more than 42" tall, no lower than 16" to the ground, and to have at least 12" between the top two strands to prevent entanglement. It is also recommended to have smooth wire on the top and bottom strands of the fence where practical.

The lower top wire allows wildlife to completely jump over the fence and reduces the breakage in the wire. The higher bottom wire allows wildlife to move under the fence and for cow calves to easily return to their mothers should they wind up in the adjacent pasture. The space between the top two strands reduces snared entrapment in the wires if wildlife legs do snag a wire as they jump over the fence.

### Why is wildlife friendly fencing needed?

Fences can create a barrier to wildlife movement. In certain areas this barrier is important for agriculture operations; however, other areas can be altered to reduce fence maintenance and allow wildlife to pass. When a fence is too high, wildlife may not be able to cross it at all or risk entangling themselves in the fence. When a fence has wire too close to the ground, wildlife can injure or entrap themselves in an attempt to crawl under. If a mother crosses

a fence but her young are not able to crawl under, the young are often abandoned and perish. Wildlife friendly fencing is necessary to avoid these deaths and to avoid damage to fencing from unsuccessful wildlife crossings.

### What are other friendly fence designs?

Wildlife fencing is not one-size-fits-all. While the guidelines on the opposite page generally work for both wildlife and cattle, it may not work for every situation. The Wyoming Wildlife Foundation's *A Wyoming Landowner's Handbook to Fences and Wildlife* includes specifications for many different fences and situations, including designs that will work for sheep, bison and horses. Here are a few seasonal ideas to consider:

**Adjustable fences:** You can use a simple staple lock to drop the top wire to the height of the second wire and raise the bottom wire to allow for wildlife to pass through when livestock aren't present.

**Lay-Down fences:** This fence section is connected to posts using loops so that when the pasture is not in use, the fence can be laid down to allow for wildlife to pass through. This has the added benefit that in the wintertime, you can lay down your fence to prevent damage from snow.

**Leave a gate open:** This is the easiest way to reduce fence damage and increase ease of passage for wildlife. Simply leave a gate open when the pasture is not in use. If you are worried about trespassing, you might consider placing a chain across the gate opening with a no trespassing sign.

**Keep fences in good repair:** Even if your fence is not a wildlife friendly design, you can reduce wildlife mortality by keeping your fence in good repair with tight wires. Loose wires increase the risk of entanglement for wildlife, leading to the need for even more repairs.

### What are the benefits to landowners?

Wildlife friendly fencing is a win for wildlife and for landowners. Landowners benefit from reduced fence damage from wildlife. They also benefit from reduced animal carcasses that can attract predators to their property. Landowners are able to enjoy the same level of fence function for containing livestock and preventing trespass, but with reduced wildlife mortality and less fence repairs.

### How is SCLT involved?

SCLT is working with interested landowners and the public to improve fencing for wildlife. We are using wildlife movement data from the North Bighorn Mule Deer Movement Study and local experience to target priority areas for fence improvements. Beginning this summer, we will host volunteers for fencing projects.

**“Even small changes to stretches of high use or where you make frequent repairs can make a big difference for wildlife - plus those changes can save you time, money and stress.” ~ Meghan Kent, SCLT Conservation Program Manager**



### How can I get involved?

**For landowners who are interested in wildlife friendly fencing:** Contact Meghan Kent, SCLT Conservation Program Manager, at Meghan@SheridanCLT.org or call the SCLT office: (307) 673-4702.

**To volunteer for a fence improvement project:** Visit <https://SheridanCLT.org/Volunteer> and complete our online volunteer sign-up and check the “Conservation” box under interests. (You can check any of the other boxes, too.) You will be notified of any upcoming volunteer opportunities.



## Find views that speak to your soul with our Gravel Guide

Picture this: it's a bluebird morning, the air is sweet and a meadowlark chorus serenades each pedal as you ride a ready-made rollercoaster through great green fields and foothills that end at the edge of snow-capped mountain peaks. A sandhill crane or two will surely trumpet your travels.

It's a pretty picture and it's exactly what to expect as you escape town for the endless adventures available on the gravel roads that connect us to the many special places sprinkled throughout our beautiful Bighorns backyard.

Part of SCLT's mission is to connect people to the places they love. Often, that mission has been accomplished by creating accessible trails close to home. And with your help, we'll continue building new trails.

However, with about 500 miles of gravel roads in Sheridan County, there are places best experienced in the saddle. With so many options, how do you know where to go? We've created our Gravel Ride Guide to help you choose the best ride for you.

"There are so many loops out in the countryside, you can do 100 miles in a day," remarked Tami Sorenson, SCLT Trails Coordinator, who worked with members of the Bomber Mountain Cycling Club to carefully curate many routes that will get you excited to get out and ride.

"The scenery along some of our gravel is really beautiful and it takes you to some unique places," she remarked. "From routes along the mountains and foothills through the prairies and the river valleys, there's some really cool places to play in."

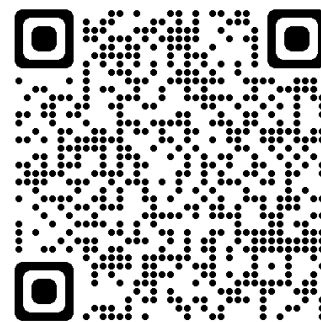
Some routes are on hard, fast gravel. Others are on grassy two tracks reminiscent of the old Bozeman Trail. Each route has detailed directions and we've created downloadable maps for your GPS. These rides are a perfect option for days when the trails are too soft to ride. They're also great for hikes, runs, photography and more!

Tami's favorite gravel route? The "East 52" which traverses the hills and valleys between Wyrarno and Ulm. "It's so incredibly peaceful. It's just you and the birds and the scenery. There are great vibes out there. Pictures just don't do it justice."

"It's a place that speaks to your soul," she concluded.

*Want to find your next favorite ride?*

Simply hover over this QR code with your phone's camera app. You can also see each guide (along with all of our trail maps) at [SheridanCLT.org](http://SheridanCLT.org).





## Survey says: ‘Help drive drought resiliency plan’

There’s an old saying that goes, “April showers bring May flowers.” And when those showers fall, our Indian paintbrush blends with a pallet of lupines, pasques, camas, yarrow, balsamroot, bee balms and dozens more to color a canvas from our open prairies to the Cloud Peak that just may make Sheridan County the prettiest picture on the planet.

The brilliance of our annual living Monet gallery is tied to how much it rains and snows, how often and when. Through March 2022, Wyoming remains mired in drought, with Sheridan County among the driest.

Drought is a recurring threat. It can last months, even years. And it can have big economic and environmental costs. While we can’t wave a magic wand and wash the drought away, we can plan ways to make living with drought less costly.

That’s exactly what SCLT is working on with our watershed health program. SCLT is taking a community-driven approach that will help our community better weather drought on the ranch, around the homestead and in the house.

To do so, SCLT is working to create a Drought Resiliency Plan - the first of its kind in Sheridan

County. It is a forward-looking document that seeks to establish a drought planning process. Our long-term vision is to safeguard local livelihoods by helping people improve water use efficiency, developing plans for water shortages and helping create adaptive strategies for when water availability is low.

But any plan cannot be community driven if the community is not asked what drives them. That’s where you come in! We have created a survey to assess your perception of drought, what you and others are doing to cope with drought and what you’d like to know to better build drought resilience in your life and on your land.

***Want to help drive the priorities of Sheridan County’s Drought Resiliency Plan? Take the short survey today!*** It will take about 5 minutes to complete.

All you have to do is hover over this QR code with your phone’s camera app. You can also take the survey on our website by visiting <https://SheridanCLT.org>.





From left: Sandy Hirz, Robert Prusak, Lynda Burton, Fran Felz and Ira Roadifer of the Clearmont Historical Group with SCLT History Program Manager Carrie Edinger at the conclusion of an Explore History program about women who influenced southeastern Sheridan County. Historical group members helped Carrie research and present fascinating stories about the life and times the community's women.

## Explore History a unique way to make a profound impact

It was on a Tuesday morning in January when Carrie Edinger, SCLT History Program Manager and Lisa Wells, Sr Fun & Wellness Coordinator at The Hub on Smith, knew they had the best kind of problem. So many people had gathered into The Hub's Café for the Explore History program about Jessamine Spear Johnson it was packed to the gills.

Carrie and Lisa looked at each and came to the same conclusion as Chief Brody in *Jaws*: "We're going to need a bigger boat." They quickly arranged to host winter programs in the WYO Theater, with 126 people coming to learn about the Tie Flume in March.

Thanks to an additional partnership with the Tongue River Valley Community Center in Dayton, nearly 400 people have had the chance to Explore History since the program's inception last fall.

Through exceptionally researched and presented programs, participants discover what's been going on in this area, gaining a better grasp of how a place and people were shaped plus, a more informed understanding of present-day issues," Wells said.

Even more people will be able to share in the fun, fellowship and fascinating stories thanks to a flexible support grant for a second year of Explore History programs from the NextFifty Initiative.

Sydney Langer, Program Officer at NextFifty, said social isolation and loneliness are a growing concern for people over the age of 50. "We see the Explore History program as a unique way to bring older adults together,

reducing social isolation while providing participants with opportunities to share their own stories."

A staple of each program is an open session where attendees share their memories and experiences, sometimes even bringing photos and keepsakes to share with the group.

"Each time after the program we have had people stay and chat about their experiences and knowledge about the topics. Finding someone who is interested in the same history you are is a wonderful perk," observed Lacie Schwend, Assistant Director at Tongue River Valley Community Center in Dayton.

Wells concurred, saying the opportunities for participants to remember and reminisce can boost mood, relieve boredom, help work through unresolved conflict, increase self-esteem, and stay connected with one another.

Langer believes those moments help combat the increased risk for depression, cognitive decline, dementia, and negative influences on blood pressure and immune function with which isolation and loneliness have been linked.

"One thing we love about the Explore History program is that participants not only have an opportunity to learn about history but also to reminisce and share their own stories," Langer remarked and explained, "Storytelling can have a profound impact, reducing memory loss and leading to improvements in mood and quality relationships."



Attendees share stories and memories during an Explore History program at The Hub on Smith. According to Sydney Langer, a Program Officer for NextFifty Initiative, storytelling can have “a profound impact” on people lives and help reduce memory loss and led to improvements in mood and relationships.

Often, those moments spur more stories - and even inspire new Explore History programs or other ways to preserve and share important local history like tours and interpretive signs.

“Community members make suggestions for program ideas and to add different perspectives,” Edinger noted.

In its second year, Edinger said she’ll be choosing from many topics of local and regional interest and hopes to incorporate more site visits and tours. “The program has just started to scratch the surface with history topics and hearing community members’ memories related to those places in time,” she stated.

Edinger is also exploring ways to bring Explore History to more communities, something Langer sees as especially important, saying, “Knowing that people in outlying areas are at even greater risk of feeling isolated, we’re also glad to see a focus on outreach to

serve the county’s more rural populations.”

“Not having to drive to Sheridan is a big deal. This programming coming to the Tongue River Valley makes it accessible for more people and provides social opportunities,” Schwend related.

This summer, community members of all ages can look forward to an outing at the Trail End State Historic Site that will feature a walk through the Kendrick arboretum and a July program that will explore the history of the Sheridan WYO Rodeo, All-American Indian Days and the Miss Indian America Pageant.

See a schedule of upcoming Explore History programs at [SheridanCLT.org/Events](http://SheridanCLT.org/Events). If you have an idea for an Explore History program, contact Carrie at [History@SheridanCLT.org](mailto:History@SheridanCLT.org). Watch past Explore History programs at [SheridanCLT.org/Tours](http://SheridanCLT.org/Tours).

## Did you know? Nearly 70% of people do not have an up-to-date will



That’s right! And for the first time, more young adults under the age of 35 have made a will than adults between the ages of 35 and 54. We hope you won’t need to use your will for many years to come, but it is never too early to start planning ahead. Whether you are 18 or 118, having a will can give you peace of mind that your wishes and loved ones are taken care of, no matter what. Creating an estate plan protects those you love and you can support organizations like SCLT in a way that will create a legacy for a cause that is close to your heart. We can help you create a legacy for what is close to your heart. To learn how, contact Brad today: [Director@SheridanCLT.org](mailto:Director@SheridanCLT.org) / (307) 673-4702.



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*With your help we strive to preserve our heritage of open spaces, healthy rivers and creeks, working ranches, wildlife habitat and vibrant history, while expanding recreation opportunities to connect people with the places they love.*

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## June 4: Trailfest presented by Sheridan Media

That's right! Trailfest 2022 is just around the corner and we've got plenty of free fun coming your way! This year even more community groups are joining us in Kendrick Park and they will all be bringing games and activities you, your family and friends will enjoy. There will be live music, food trucks, and all of your favorite cold beverages. You'll also have the opportunity to cheer on what will be a record-breaking number of riders grinding gravel in the Dead Swede Gravel Race/Ride/Tour.

See what's in store for Trailfest 2022 at [SheridanCLT.org](http://SheridanCLT.org).

## July 13: WyoGives for Red Grade Trails

The third annual statewide day of giving known as WyoGives is scheduled for Wednesday, July 13. Last year, kind people who care - like you - raised more than \$2.3 million for nonprofits across Wyoming. That includes nearly \$75,000 that will help make the first connection from The Base to Bear Gulch at Red Grade Trails this summer!

Thanks to the support of our community, we have already invested \$1 million to build Red Grade Trails. Today's best estimate is \$1 million more, with \$200,000 going to our 2023 priority - an equestrian/hiker trail from Base Trailhead to Poverty Flat - to finish the whole system.

The Hughes Charitable Foundation has already pledged to match the first \$1 million in gifts made to participating nonprofits statewide on July 13 and we're working with some great friends on ways to make your WyoGives gifts go even further. Together, we can complete Red Grade Trails faster than imagined!