

Spring 2025



Sheridan
Community
LAND TRUST
Conservation | History | Recreation

Connecting people to land and history



See how YOU have connected people to land & history!

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April showers gave way to a rainbow over the SCLT Big Goose Natural Area. The 117-acre site is open for our community to enjoy every day from sunrise to sunset. Thanks to support from people like you, admission is free.

The dream is reality as the SCLT Big Goose Natural Area takes flight

Just west of Sheridan, beneath wide Wyoming skies and along the banks of Big Goose Creek, a dream has taken flight—and it's all thanks to you.

We are thrilled to announce that the SCLT Big Goose Natural Area (BGNA) is now open. "It is a 'community jewel' that brings together outdoor recreation, agriculture, conservation, and historic preservation in a way that directly connects people to land and history – and will do so for generations to come," said SCLT Executive Director Brad Bauer.

This 117-acre community jewel is more than a natural area—it symbolizes what happens when a community comes together. A place where trails wind through meadows and riparian woodlands, wildlife finds refuge, and families can fish, float, explore, or simply sit and take in the view. It's also a working landscape, honoring Sheridan County's agricultural heritage while providing educational opportunities for generations to come."

What makes the BGNA truly special is its multi-use purpose: a natural space open to the public, a classroom without walls, a conservation project with lasting impact, and a preserved piece of Sheridan County's rich history. Every acre is being stewarded with care and intention, from its scenic vistas to its rich riparian ecosystems.

"The SCLT Big Goose Natural Area is a living, breathing community space where people and nature thrive together." ~ Brad Bauer, SCLT Executive Director.

And it happened because of you!

The BGNA was made possible thanks to community donors who shared SCLT's dream for a conserved



Twenty-two (!) volunteers joined us on March 26 to help get the SCLT Big Goose Natural Area ready to welcome our community. Their help was greatly appreciated. Creating a space, like the BGNA, that directly connects people to SCLT's work in history, conservation, and recreation is a dream come true. Because of support from community friends, this valuable new resource for everyone in Sheridan County is possible. Best of all, it is conveniently close to home!

open space like the BGNA and a shared vision with the Homer A. and Mildred S. Scott Foundation, which owns and operates the neighboring Bridges community site.

"Whether you gave your time, your resources, your support, or shared SCLT's work with your friends and family, you helped make this dream a reality," Brad reasoned.

The BGNA is open every day, from dawn to dusk. It is located at 14 Lane Ln, alongside the SCLT Office and SCLT Community Rooms. For now, you can enjoy about a mile of trail, plus access to the creek for floating and fishing (catch-and-release, barbless lure/fly only, please). The trail is open to eBikes, unlike other SCLT trails. You will also see ongoing conservation and recreation demonstrations, like wildlife-friendly fences, floater-friendly fences, streambank restoration, juniper removals, invasive grass treatments, and stone structures called Zeedyks that are used to restore wet meadows.

That is to say, the BGNA remains a work in progress. As SCLT works to enhance the site with new trails, educational programming, and habitat restoration, we hope the BGNA will be a place where you'll return again and again. For quiet walks. For family outings. For moments that remind us why we conserve the places we love.

So bring your boots. Bring your binoculars. Bring your kids or your curiosity. The SCLT Big Goose Natural Area is open—and it belongs to you.

From all of us at Sheridan Community Land Trust, thank you. Your support allowed a place full of wonder, learning, and connection to take flight. Let's keep flying, together.

Scan the QR Code to learn more or visit SheridanCLT.org/SCLT-Big-Goose-Natural-Area/.





Hitting the Trail: What's ahead for SCLT this season

As our landscape springs back into life and grows into its many wondrous colors, you may wonder what SCLT's plans are for our growing network of incredible trails for the season.

In the big picture, SCLT will continue to provide our community with fun ways to connect to nature and the outdoors on sustainable, well-maintained trails. How that is accomplished is likely to evolve as the season progresses.

Thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Wyoming Recreational Trails Program and a partnership with Wyoming Pathways, the Highlander Trail at Red Grade Trails is scheduled to be built this year.

This new, tree-lined trail will connect The Aspens Trailhead to the Little Bear Loop, offering up to eight loop options for visitors and residents

to enjoy!

That isn't the only work planned for Red Grade Trails this season. After the wildfire changed our plans last year on the three other trails at The Aspens Trailhead, SCLT is excited to continue progress on these trails this summer.

Unfortunately, we lost the support of an AmeriCorps team that was going to help on these projects due to funding freezes from the federal government. Without the support of the AmeriCorps, our plan now is to work on these trails with a Montana Conservation Corps team that will serve with us for two weeks, our summer interns who will help on trails and improve wildlife habitat on the Big Goose Natural Area, and with volunteers like you.

As of this writing, SCLT is working with our partners at the USFS to coordinate repairs to sections of Red Grade Trails that were damaged during the response to last fall's Elk Fire. Repairs will be made as soon as resources and weather allow.

Stay on the lookout for volunteer opportunities that will help repair some of Red Grade Trails even faster. Some repairs may have already happened by the time you read this article!

As always, when working on the mountain, the only guarantee is that there are no guarantees. However, we can guarantee it's hard to have a bad time when you spend your day on a trail in our beautiful Bighorns backyard!

SCLT's Most Needed Now

Would you like to donate something SCLT needs now? We've compiled a list of helpful items - some small, some large - that are needed now. We call it "SCLT's Most Needed Now."

There, you can see how you can make a difference today by helping SCLT programs secure what is needed most.

You can see what each program and the Big Goose Natural Area need most now by scanning the QR code or visiting SheridanCLT.org/Most-Needed-Now/.



From game warden to a game storyteller: Bruce Scigliano brings his passion for connecting people to SCLT

SCLT is thrilled to welcome Bruce Scigliano as our first-ever Communications and Marketing Intern! From game warden to outdoor storyteller, Bruce brings a lifelong love for wild places, a camera-ready curiosity, and a passion for connecting people to the land.

With a fresh eye for visual storytelling, Bruce is diving into photography, videography, and the heart of SCLT's work—from trails to history to conservation. His mission? Celebrate the volunteers and voices behind it all.

Bruce's journey began wandering hills as a kid and learning conservation from his grandfather. Now, he's ready to share the stories that make our Bighorns backyard so special.

When he's not snapping pics or recording his podcast *Dawson's Den*, he's out fishing, hiking, or building scale model theme parks.

So, the next time you see him on the trail or at an event, say "howdy!"—he just might point you toward your next favorite place.

Find a fun way where you can say "howdy!" to Bruce by scanning the QR code or visiting SheridanCLT.org/Events.



April showers weren't enough to dampen Bruce Scigliano's spirits as he captured the magic of Unplug: Herons at Home.



From Set Aside to Set in Motion:

Use Your DAF to Empower Sheridan County

Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs) offer a powerful way to make lasting, transformative gifts. DAFs allow you to set aside charitable assets now—securing immediate tax benefits—while granting the flexibility to support nonprofits SCLT over time.

DAFs are an effective way ***YOU CAN HELP RIGHT NOW*** because your funds are already set aside for giving so putting them to work today can make an immediate, tangible impact when your community needs it most!

DAFs are meant for generosity, and in times of uncertainty or challenge, activating those resources can be the difference between SCLT completing the next community trail, preserving part of our history that is at risk of being lost, or helping a local family conserve their ranch forever. It's not about giving more—it's about giving now, when it truly matters.

By recommending a grant from your DAF to SCLT, you can connect thousands of people to nature on a new trail at Bear Gulch for decades to come! Or preserve the ol' No. 115 streetcar or secure a pivotal piece of equipment like a skid steer that will help steward the Big Goose Natural Area, aid local conservation projects, and help maintain trails for many years. ***YOU CAN BE A HERO*** to your community in a time of need. Your support ensures future generations can enjoy the beauty and stories we cherish today. Be a hero and start a gift from your DAF today by scanning the QR code or visiting SheridanCLT.org/Get-Involved/Ways-To-Give.





An old postcard depicts a streetcar running along Main Street in Sheridan more than 100 years ago. This winter, SCLT began efforts to preserve and restore Wyoming's last remaining streetcar.

A streetcar named 'Preservation'

Volunteers help slow deterioration of Wyoming's last remaining streetcar

Like the symbolic streetcar of Blanche DuBois' haunting journey in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Sheridan's last streetcar once carried dreams, duty, and daily life across town. Today, the ol' No. 115 sits idle and worn down, but not forgotten.

Thanks to a team of volunteers working with Sheridan Community Land Trust (SCLT), efforts to preserve and restore this iconic piece of Wyoming's past are gaining traction once again.

Built during the golden age of electrified transportation, the Sheridan streetcar system began in 1911 and was operated by the Electric Street Railway of Dayton, Ohio. The original "City Line" ran through downtown Sheridan. Its success soon led to a second route—the "Fort Line"—that extended from Main Street, up Lewis Hill to the county fairgrounds, across Deadman's Draw, and on to Fort Mackenzie – the present-day VA Medical Center.

Riders who reached the Fort helped rotate the

car on a turntable for the return journey. "There's something beautifully communal in that image," said SCLT History Program Manager Kevin Knapp. "People riding together, turning the car together. It's history that moved—literally and figuratively."

But like Blanche's fading Southern grandeur, the streetcar's luster dimmed over time. Passenger counts dropped, and in 1923, the City Line was shut down. By 1924, the Fort Line had also been replaced by a bus. The era had passed, and the streetcar was cast aside.

Yet, decades later, the last remaining car—No. 115—was found abandoned in a field. In 1976, as part of America's Bicentennial celebrations, Sheridan residents, businesses, and community groups rallied to restore the car, symbolically retrieving a forgotten piece of identity. For a time, it stood as a physical link between past and present.

Now, nearly 50 years after that revival, the car is again in disrepair. And once again, our community



Volunteers Jason Weston and Bill Matteson helped SCLT wrap the No. 115 streetcar this winter. SCLT is working with the North Main Association and City of Sheridan to preserve and restore the streetcar so we all can learn about the role streetcars played as Sheridan and the communities surrounding it developed.

stands ready to rescue it.

As part of its mission to preserve local history, SCLT has taken up the charge. “It’s a tangible, visible part of our shared history,” Kevin said. “Everyone who sees it feels something—nostalgia, pride, even a little bit of wonder.”

“We’re not just preserving a vehicle, we’re honoring a way of life, and inviting the community to come along for the ride.”

~ Kevin Knapp, SCLT History Program Manager.

Working with volunteers Jason Weston and Bill Matteson, SCLT secured the car for winter: broken windows were boarded up, and a tarp now shields its roof from snow and rain. “This will hopefully slow down the streetcar’s deterioration,” Kevin explained. “We continue to monitor the effectiveness of our efforts and adjust our strategies as needed.”

But that’s only the first stop on a much longer journey. The ultimate goal? A complete exterior restoration, with possible interior refurbishment that would allow visitors to step inside and experience

what it was like to ride. “We want people to do more than look—we want them to feel,” Kevin remarked.

SCLT isn’t attempting to ride this project’s rails alone. The North Main Association owns the car and supports the restoration effort. The City of Sheridan has even commissioned a proposal from a professional train restoration firm as part of 2026’s Semiquincentennial celebration. And the bus barn at SCLT’s Big Goose Natural Area could house the streetcar during restoration and later display it as a public heritage piece.

Like the characters in Tennessee Williams’ classic, this project is powered by memory—but also resilience. “We’re not just preserving a vehicle,” Kevin reflected. “We’re honoring a way of life, and inviting the community to come along for the ride.”

You can help restore the ol’ No. 115 by making a gift to help purchase restoration materials, volunteering on restoration work days, and even sharing family stories and photos of the streetcar. “It’s more than steel and wood. The streetcar is a way we can all get on the tracks and connect with our past,” Kevin concluded.

Scan the QR Code to help preserve the ol’ No. 115 street car or visit SheridanCLT.org/Donate/.





Volunteers help remove junipers from the grasslands at the SCLT Big Goose Natural Area this spring. Removing junipers will help native grasses and wildlife thrive.

Clearing the way for wildlife and grasses at the Big Goose Natural Area

At Big Goose Natural Area (BGNA), SCLT is working hard to restore the land to its natural glory—by removing junipers that are crowding out native grasses and wildlife.

“Across the West, unchecked juniper growth is hurting native ecosystems,” explained John Graves, SCLT Director of Conservation. “Junipers compete with native grasses for water and space, reducing habitat for mule deer, sage grouse, and other ground-nesting birds.”

While junipers are native, their expansion into grasslands has gone largely unmanaged due to decades of fire suppression. Historically, frequent, low intensity fires kept young junipers from colonizing grasslands. Without natural controls, they’ve spread rapidly across grasslands, changing the landscape in ways that reduce the number of different plant and animal species and increase fire risk.

Once established, the patches of dry, barren dirt that form around the intruding junipers creating openings for invasive grasses to grow. This makes it even harder for healthy grasslands to take hold.

“The thick cover of junipers creates dry conditions fueling more frequent and intense wildfires. They also open ‘islands’ of dirt where invasive grasses thrive,” Graves reasoned.

Removing trees is never an easy decision. However, by removing junipers from the BGNA’s grasslands, SCLT is following current management recommendation developed by the NRCS and University of Wyoming. As part of the long-term management of the BGNA, Graves said SCLT will be also working to improve habitat in the cottonwood pasture along the creek so that it is flush with birds, deer, and other wildlife.

“SCLT strives to utilize current science and best management practices as it stewards a community gem like the BGNA for today and the future,” Graves offered.

We are excited to witness the birds and animals that will appreciate the local mix of habitat with the restored grasslands on the BGNA and junipers that are established throughout the valley.

Once the junipers are cleared, SCLT expects to see native grasses reclaim

the hillsides within a few short years, creating healthier forage for wildlife and better habitat for grassland birds.

So, should you do the same on your land? “Thick dense stands of junipers typically do not see cost/benefit of removal and habitat improvement that would justify the undertaking,” Graves advised. “Removal of small stands and sporadic growth is a manageable project with real habitat improvements seen in the first couple of years.”

“Removing junipers gives native grasses and wildlife a chance to thrive again.” ~ John Graves, SCLT Director of Conservation.



Greener pastures ahead: How irrigation helps all at the Big Goose Natural Area

Something is flowing at Big Goose Natural Area—and it's not just the creeks! SCLT is adding irrigation to its Hay Pasture, bringing both agriculture and wildlife habitat into sharper focus.

The BGNA and surrounding lands have many different water rights that have been used for irrigation of the property for agricultural purposes for generations. However, the property's use changed a lot over the years as roads were put in and buildings were erected, and the land was used differently.

"SCLT holds water rights on the BGNA property that has a point of use where the roads and buildings are located. While this does allow us to irrigate the grasses around the buildings, there is no primary agriculture element related to that," SCLT Director of Conservation explained.

The Hay Pasture, he said, is already ready to irrigate - something that will help agriculture and wildlife both. With a working underground sprinkler line and risers ready for side rolls or big sprinklers, this effort will boost both forage quantity and quality.

"Irrigated grass grows deeper roots," Graves said.

"That means healthier plants that survive drought and produce more feed for livestock and wildlife alike."

And since irrigation increases both the quantity and quality of forage, with grasses growing deeper roots that resist drought and heat stress, that's great news for livestock and wildlife alike.

But the benefits don't stop there. Irrigating grasslands helps prevent invasive weeds, restores bare soil, and even nourishes surrounding cottonwood

trees—critical habitat for countless wild species. "It's not just tall grass," Graves relayed. "It's a healthier, more vibrant ecosystem."

A long-term goal of SCLT is to acquire donated reservoir shares which would allow water into habitats like the Tree Pasture—an area

brimming with vital cottonwoods.

"When properly managed, livestock and wildlife can happily coexist all times of the year. What benefits the habitat for wildlife also benefits livestock, and vice-versa," Graves reasoned. "Livestock and agriculture is a tool to manage the land, and when done correctly, that tool is used to improve the land for all that need it for their survival."

"Irrigated grass grows deeper roots. That means healthier plants that resist drought and heat stress." ~ John Graves, SCLT Director of Conservation.



SCLT Recreation Program Manager Jared Koenig paddles through a floater-friendly fence that he and his father, Tim Koenig, have designed and built. The floater-friendly fence is being tested at the SCLT Big Goose Natural Area. Jared says the fence helps solve a problem that challenges floaters and landowners alike: how to design a fence that will keep livestock from walking under during low water, allowing debris to keep from collecting during high water, and always allow recreational users to pass through safely.

Unshackling Wyoming's waterways with floater-friendly fence

On a wintery Friday afternoon, Sheridan Community Land Trust Recreation Program Manager Jared Koenig sat tinkering with his latest creation – a contraption made of steel and bolts that form an articulating jaw that looks like it could nip at twigs and shrubs like a mule deer.

However, this creation isn't intended to browse your brush. "It is a shackle that has a trigger mechanism that opens the jaws to release whatever is hooked to it," he said.

In this case, the shackle is hooked to an H-brace and steel cable to create the backbone of what Jared calls a "floater-friendly, debris-friendly fence."

And with it, Koenig hopes to unshackle an opportunity that will help people explore the often-overlooked rivers and streams of Wyoming.

"Livestock producers all over struggle with variable water flows. When the water is low, the livestock can walk under the fence, and when the water is high, debris can tear down the whole fence," he explained. "This fence allows debris and boaters to pass under the fence while still providing a visual barrier to livestock."

The fence is comprised of a steel cable suspended between a pair of H-braces installed on each bank at the creek's typical high-water mark. "The cable supports a hanging 'curtain' that drapes down to the water and pivots from the cable allowing boats or logs to float through them," he elaborated.

The shackle fixes a problem that plagues many ranchers: how do you keep your fence from being damaged when spring runoff brings big debris like fallen trees directly into your fence?

“The shackle’s quick-release mechanism allows us to control where the fence disconnects so it doesn’t release debris into the waterway,” he relayed.

It solves a problem near and dear to Jared’s heart. He’s a passionate paddler who frequently floats Wyoming’s waterways. But he has found accessing rivers and creeks can be a challenge, even downright dangerous because fences often create hazards that aren’t always safe to navigate.

With a lifetime spent helping on his family’s ranch outside of Aladdin, Jared said he understands why fences across waterways are needed and hopes his innovation will help continue “a long history of ranching and recreation existing side by side.”

It’s also a bit of a father-and-son project, with Jared’s dad, Tim Koenig, helping Jared with the design and donating his time, materials, and use of his plasma table to help bring his son’s idea to life. Together, they’ve utilized their engineers’ minds and ranchers’ practicality to create an effective, economical design.

The floater-and-debris-friendly fence is being

tested at SCLT’s Big Goose Natural Area, where cattle graze along Big Goose Creek. Once he hones in on a final design, Jared intends to put together a guide that allows anyone interested to install their own friendly fence soup to nuts.

“It will help ag producers be more efficient and effective and keep recreational floaters safe.” ~ Jared Koenig, SCLT Recreational Program Manager.

The Vernon S. and Rowena W. Griffith Foundation and the Wyoming Office for Outdoor Recreation helped fund and develop SCLT’s pilot design for floater- and debris-friendly fence.

Scan the QR Code to see what fun you can have on the water with our curated Tongue River Water Trail guide (you’ll see all of our trail maps and guides, too) or visit SheridanCLT.org/Explore/Guides/.



Find meaningful ways to give back in our community with the SCLT Volunteer Corner

Volunteering strengthens our community and helps connect us to the people and places we love.

You can play a crucial role by helping build and maintain trails, conserving open space, sharing local history, and caring for wildlife habitat.

Volunteering your time and talents turns ideas into action, helping ensure future generations can enjoy Sheridan County’s landscapes. It also empowers you to make a direct, lasting impact while gaining meaningful experiences and friendships along the way.

To help you help, we’ve created the SCLT Volunteer Corner on our website. It is a dedicated place to find SCLT’s upcoming volunteer opportunities. Some opportunities are organized activities like a trail work night or a volunteer fence pull. Others are ongoing, like historical research and conservation stewardship. Either way, there’s a way for you to make a difference!

Scan the QR Code to learn more or visit SheridanCLT.org/Volunteer/.



Pat Grantham is one of many people who have found a meaningful way to give back as a volunteer. In March, Pat helped us open the Big Goose Natural Area.



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SheridanCLT.org



Sheridan Community Land Trust preserves our 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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SAVE THE DATE

June 25: SCLT Backyard BBQ

It's official – the SCLT Big Goose Natural Area is open! Join us for a Backyard BBQ celebration on June 25 from 5–7:30 p.m. at 14 Lane Lane, presented by Eliason Financial and First Federal Bank & Trust.

Enjoy a fun evening with live music from Tris Munsick, guided hikes, games, raffles, and more! It's free to attend and better than ever—thanks to updates that'll get you from the serving line to the fun even faster. Come celebrate how this community jewel connects us to land, history, and places we love!

Please RSVP to help us plan. Scan the QR code to see everything on the raffle and RSVP or visit SheridanCLT.org/Events/SCLT-Backyard-BBQ-2025/.



July 16: WyoGives 2025

The sixth annual statewide day of giving known as WyoGives is scheduled for Wednesday, July 16. Since its inception, WyoGives has raised over \$14 million for Wyoming nonprofits. Last year, more than 7,000 donors came together to support organizations making a difference, like SCLT! That includes **119 gifts from community friends like you that raised \$47,216.36** to connect people to nature, the outdoors, land, history, and the places we all love in Sheridan County! Thank you!

That kindness is inspiring! This year, we are excited to announce a match meant to inspire even more kindness. **Carol and Sam Mavrakis of The Seidler Foundation will match the first \$10,000 in gifts made online and offline before July 16.**

All gifts will be used to connect more people to land and history in Sheridan County! Make your WyoGives gift today using the QR Code or visit SheridanCLT.org/WyoGives-2025/.

