



Wyoming Water Association

# Wyoming Water Flow

## Water is Wyoming's Gold

Wyoming Water Association

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The Wyoming Water Association (WWA) is entering an exciting time as water continues to be a rich resource that Wyoming is proud to call their own. To promote,

protect and educate; the WWA continues to focus on their main objectives as a vital association to Wyoming's resource.

The Summer Tour was a great mid-

summer

break to understand the different utilization of water throughout our towns and counties. Many enjoyed the fellowship and camaraderie that is found in such an organization.

The excitement doesn't end with the summer coming to a close. Make sure to mark your calendar for the upcoming Annual Conference/ Education Seminar October 29-31.

Enjoy this edition of the Wyoming Water Flow and have a great August!

### Tour at the Sheridan Water Treatment Plant



### Summer Tour

The summer tour drew sun and a crowd. The day was scheduled full of events with plenty to do, see and appreciate the rich resource of water in the Sheridan- Buffalo area. The day started at the Sheridan Water Treatment Plant with an informative tour by Mike Cole; finding

out that the plant's operating capacity was 4.4 million gallons per day. Following was a breathtaking view of Meade Creek Irrigation Drop Structure and the last stop before lunch was the Storey Fish Hatchery which is the oldest hatchery in the state. Lake DeSmet offered a

beautiful view and great stop for lunch as we heard from the Lake DeSmet Counties Coalition and a Coal Bed Methane Update.

The last stop of the Day was the Buffalo Water Treatment Plant. Feature articles of locations are found in this issue.

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## Summer Tour: Lake DeSmet offers potential for long-term uses

The gift of water was the focus of a presentation during the July 18 Wyoming Water Association tour in Sheridan and Johnson counties. Bruce Yates, former Sheridan County Planner, presented information about Lake DeSmet's history and new ownership.

Lake DeSmet is a natural water body located off of Interstate 90 between Buffalo and Sheridan where it receives most of its water from Piney and Clear creeks. The Lake DeSmet Counties Coalition (LDCC) currently holds the Lake DeSmet water level at 4,610 feet elevation, which is 20 feet below the top of the dam, Yates said. Approximately 234,987 acre-feet is stored in the lake with 13 water right priorities.

In 2000 former owner Texaco wanted to get rid of Lake DeSmet due to a soft coal market and changing trends. The oil company offered the lake to the state of Wyoming, but Governor Jim Geringer passed the offer to the Lake DeSmet locals. Sheridan, Johnson and Campbell counties took hold and the result was a bonus water supply with great potential.

"Texaco basically transferred ownership to the counties," Yates said. "The counties took on a little risk in not knowing the condition of the lake facilities, but they also didn't have to pay for it."

Sheridan County served as the administrator for Lake DeSmet and Yates was asked to help evaluate their new acquisition. The LDCC applied to the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) to evaluate the condition of the 27-year-old facilities and to develop a master plan to help guide operations, Yates said.

The lake has an inlet tunnel measuring 8,400 feet long and 200 feet under water that hadn't been inspected since its construction in the early 1980s. The inspection resulted in positive findings.

"It was in very good condition," Yates said. "I've been so impressed with the concrete work done on this facility."

Campbell County left the coalition in 2003 and Sheridan and Johnson counties make up the current joint powers board.

When Texaco transferred the lake ownership they also sold the surrounding land and the lakeside properties are beginning to see more development. The new neighbors caused the LDCC to address water levels and embankment conditions more carefully and part of their tact was to apply for a second WWDC study to determine the need for additional monitoring. In 2005, the LDCC again asked the WWDC to fund a rehabilitation project for the facilities. A \$165,000 price tag covered inspection, re-

placement and construction costs for Lake DeSmet's facilities. In May 2006 waves caused by a severe windstorm hit the south dam embankment resulting in the loss of approximately 6,000 cubic yards of rip rap. The damage jumped the rehabilitation costs up to an estimated \$1.2 million.

"It's amazing what waves and wind can produce," said Yates. "Those waves were coming up 15 feet on the embankment and coming back underneath the rip rap and taking it into the lake." LDCC is looking into funding sources and hopes to have the project complete by 2009.

Last year, the LDCC teamed up with the city of Buffalo and Sheridan Area Water Supply to request yet another WWDC study. The study's purpose is to determine quality baseline information and the potential regional supply of water to Sheridan and Johnson counties and the study is not yet complete.

"These communities are fixed pretty well with water supplies, but I see Lake DeSmet in the long run as being very useful to our communities in this region," said Yates.



Presentation of Lake DeSmet

## Summer Tour: Ditch structure project goes online

**Sheridan** – Approximately 100 years ago men dug through a hillside by hand to pipe water for the Meade Creek Ditch Irrigation Drop. A century later, badly eroded soils and pipe decay call for repairs to the project.

The Meade Creek ditch drop is located outside of Sheridan. The original ditch was hand dug and placed partway in pipe and after decades of use the pipe began to disintegrate. The ditch was one of several stops on the July 18 Wyoming Water Association summer tour held in Sheridan and Johnson counties.

Vice President of the Meade Creek Irrigation District Jim Roach says four years ago the shareholders on the ditch saw the erosion getting worse and worse and set out to do something about it. To replace the existing system, the irrigation district turned to fund-

ing from the Wyoming Water Development Commission, the Sheridan County Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

“The ditch covers a lot of country, but it goes through large landowners,” says Roach. “With only 12 or 13 landowners on the ditch, dividing the cost would have been too much.”

The \$500,000 project included construction of approximately 680 feet of new 24-inch irrigation pipe installed by directional drilling, new inlet and outlet structures and irrigation ditch extensions to connect the new structures to existing ditches.

The purpose of the project was to cut down on erosion and ease some liability. Roach says the liability aspect came in the potential loss of livestock should they fall into the badly eroded area.

Water was turned into the new pipe in mid-July and Roach says everything looks good so far. The ditch is running 11 cubic-feet-squared (cfs) and will run 15 to 18 cfs at peak season. The ditch does have rights to 20 cfs but Roach says the landowners have put in efficient systems and don't require that much water.

Roach says reclamation for the eroded area was taken out of the current project because the cost was too high. He says they plan to revisit the reclamation issue in the next couple of years and their current focus is on fixing the pipe.

“About two weeks ago a visible section fell off,” says Roach. “The timing of this project was important because there would be more erosion this season.”

The life of the project is expected to be approximately 50 years.



Group at Meade Creek Ditch Irrigation Drop



Sheridan Water Treatment Plant

Storey Fish Hatchery



## Fall Convention Preview

**“We want to make sure that all of you mark your calendars for the annual meeting coming up in Casper this October.”**

**-Ron Cunningham**



Ramada Plaza Riverside and Convention Center  
300 West F. St.  
Casper WY 82601  
Telephone: (307) 235-2531

Held in Casper, Wyoming, the schedule for the annual conference/educational seminar will be slightly different from past years. On October 29th the conference will kick off at noon. After opening remarks from your President, Ron Cunningham, the general session will introduce the theme of this year’s convention, groundwater. Throughout the opening day look forward to topics on drilling technologies, Wyoming aquifers and recharge areas as well as well screens casing and gravel pack. The day will continue with well requirements and testing in addition to

a Bureau of Reclamation Tour or the option of breakout sessions addressing technical aspects. The day will conclude with a raffle and the annual silent auction fundraiser. Look forward to the evening banquet spotlighting the scholarship recipients and a guest speaker.

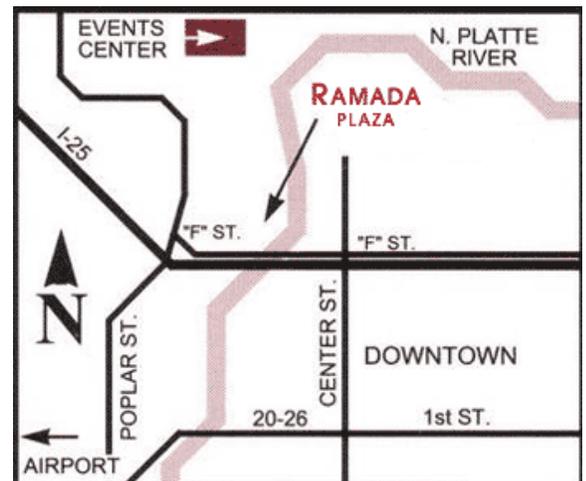
October 30th will begin with an annual business meeting and an advisor’s update panel followed by a candidate forum that will feature the primary winners for the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. The luncheon will feature a keynote address from Governor Dave Freudenthal and

the afternoon will be in full swing starting with well permitting, water quality and DEQ permitting. The day will come to a close with water development on public lands and adjournment by Ron Cunningham.

October 31st will feature morning sessions of: risk/liability of groundwater development (including case studies); panel discussion on driller registration and a conference wrap up.

Don’t wait to reserve your spot for this year’s conference. You may register online, by phone, or at the door. See you in Casper!

- Online:** [www.wyomingwater.org](http://www.wyomingwater.org)
- By Phone:** 307-286-8614
- By Mail:** P.O. Box 21701  
Cheyenne, WY 82003



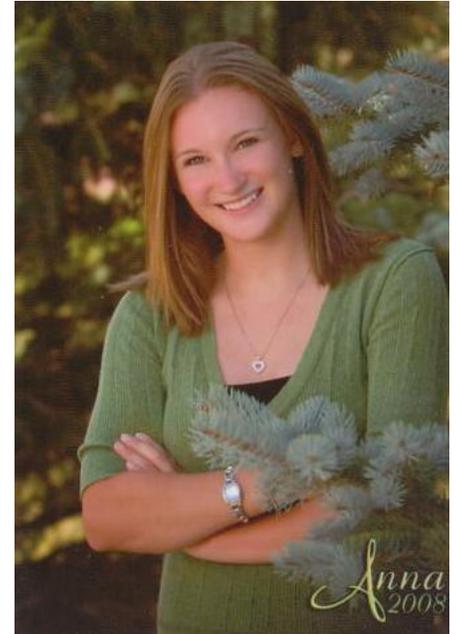
## Scholarship Recipient

### *Anna Melcher*

Anna Melcher is the daughter of Dan and Melinda Melcher. She was raised on a farm west of Wheatland and learned at a young age the value of hard work. Starting with picking rocks and weeds out of the field to now driving

tractor to help with the harvest. Anna has been very involved throughout her High School career, holding offices in several clubs: FBLA, FFA, Student Council and National Honor Society. She is also a 9 year

member of 4-H, Swine being her favorite project. This fall Anna will begin class at Laramie County Community College to complete pre-requisite classes in order to apply for the Surgical Technology Program next spring.



## Scholarship Recipient

### *Jordan Wambeke*

Jordan is the son of Nick Wambeke, who is currently serves as the 1st Vice President of the WWA. Before attending the University of Wyoming,

Jordan lived in Cody, Powell and Deaver. Jordan will be starting his second year at UW and has recently changed his major from Mechanical Engineering to Rangeland

Ecology. After receiving his degree, Jordan hopes to pursue a career in wildlife management or consulting for new construction in wildlife areas.

## Committee Updates

### Select Water Committee Report

The Select Water Committee Report held a meeting on June 5, 2008 in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The meeting covered various topics beginning with the approval of planning division contract documents followed by the University of Wyoming passing MOUS. The revised rules for Operating Criteria for the Wyoming Water Development Program were also approved. The Commission had approved a motion to conditionally approve the criteria following a coordinating meeting with certain state agencies for the small water project program and consider their recommendations at the August meeting; however when brought forth again this motion failed on a tie vote. CoChairman Rodney Anderson moved to draft a letter similar to the WWDC to establish a Corps of Engineers Board of Appeals for applicants for permits under the Clean Water Act for interested Committee members to sign and the motion passed.

Next Meeting:  
August 20-22, 2008  
Alpine, Wyoming

### Agriculture Committee Report

The Joint Interim Agriculture, State and Public Lands and Water Resource Committee held a meeting on April 28-29 2008 in Saratoga, Wyoming and the Committee voted to draft the following legislation: state engineer rulemaking authority for electronic permitting, discharge water management, irrigation districts relating to subdivisions; state trust land management account; agricultural producer development program; weights and measures; fuel quality and blends, fertilizers, the cottage food industry; feral goats and anti-trust in agriculture. Other topics of discussion included from the State Engineer's Office current and potential litigation issues and rulemaking statutes; from the Department of Agriculture progress of country of origin labeling; Livestock Board gave an update on livestock and wildlife disease and more.

Next Meeting:  
September 29-30, 2008  
Green River, Wyoming

## Colorado River

On July 16, 2008 the Federal Register announced a notice of proposed rulemaking by the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to regulate the use of the lower Colorado River water without an entitlement. For the past eight years, Colorado River basins have experienced the worst drought conditions seen in the past 100 years to be recorded and the USBR believes that development of this rule will help ensure "the long-term sustainability of the lower Colorado River and in doing so will protect the water rights of lower Colorado River water entitlement holders".

Comments Due: September 15, 2008

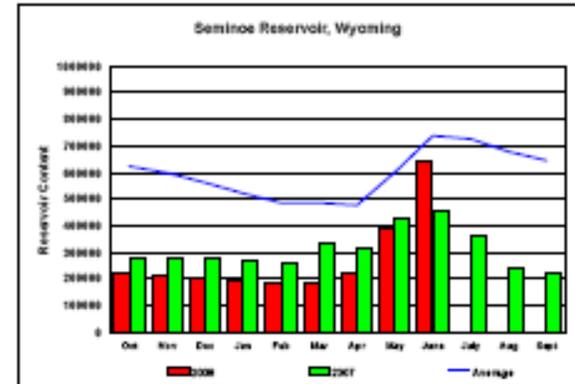
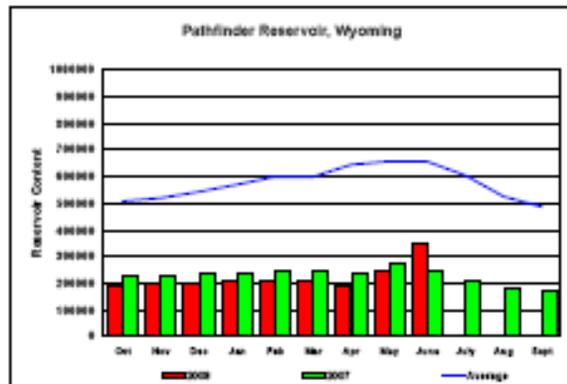
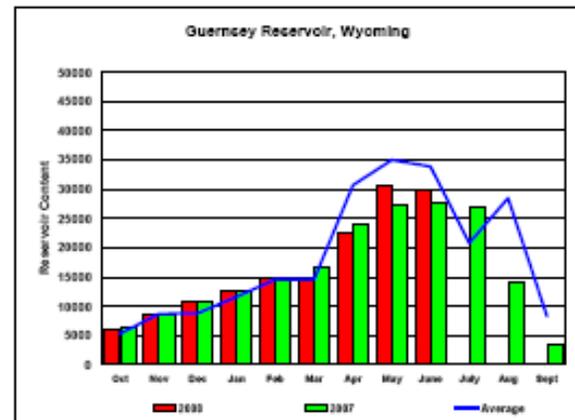
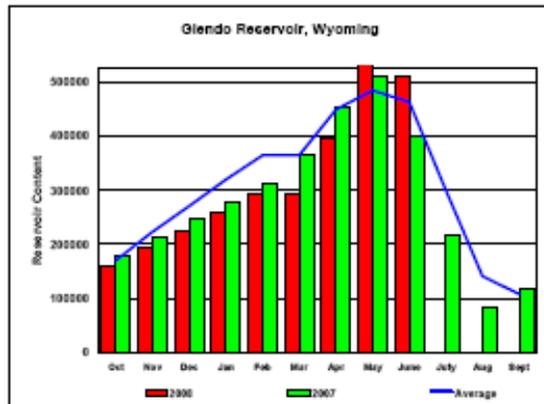
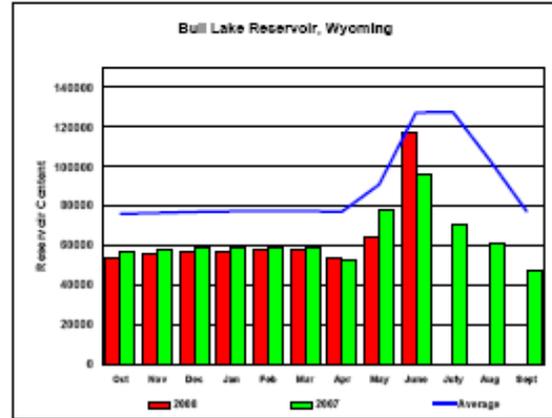
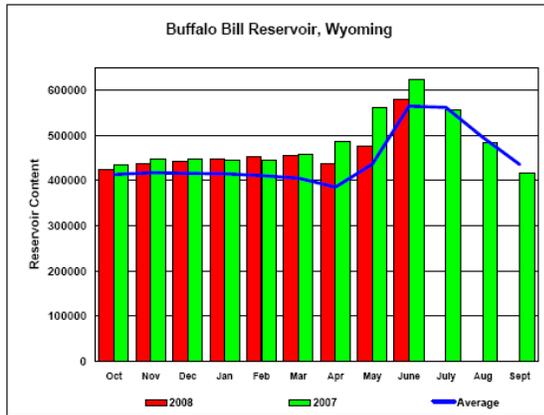
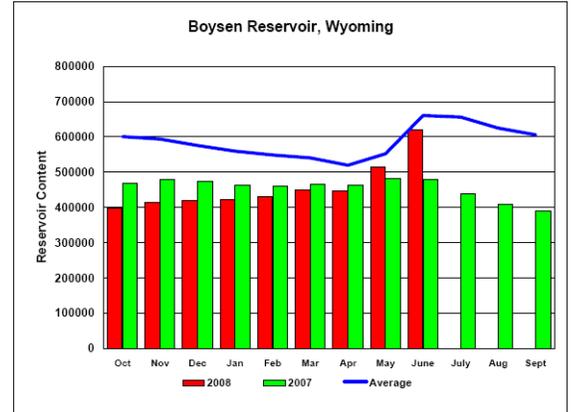
*For more information visit:*

<http://www.setonresourcecenter.com/register/2008/Jul/16/40916A.pdf#xml=http://www.setonresourcecenter.com/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getpdfhits&u=ffffffff40fa3c9&stgd=yes&DocId=17465&request=Colorado%20River&index=D%3a%5cIndex%5cFR%5f2008&searchFlags=1773572&autoStopLimit=5000&SearchForm=D%3a%5ccrc%5cFR%5fdaily%5cdtSearch%5fform%2ehtml&.pdf>

# Water Level Update

The following graphs are from the United States Bureau of Reclamation website for an update on Wyoming reservoir content. Each of the graphs display data for 2007, 2008 and the average. For more information on content and Wyoming water reservoirs visit:

[http://www.usbr.gov/gp/lakes\\_reservoirs/wyoming\\_lakes.htm](http://www.usbr.gov/gp/lakes_reservoirs/wyoming_lakes.htm)



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## Remarks from the President

For all the WWA members who missed the summer tour, you missed a great one. Starting in Sheridan and finishing in Buffalo. And what a great year to have a tour- green grass and wild flowers everywhere you looked on the mountains and down in the valleys, and for those who drove

over the Big Horn Mountains- we had snow drifts coming over both Burgess Junction and Powder River Pass and to still have snow drifts in July, that is really great. Water runoff is great in most areas of Wyoming thanks to the great spring and early rains and snows.

And we want to make sure that all of you mark your calendars for the annual meeting coming up in Casper this October. Jack and his committee are busy putting together a great program- see you there.

-Ron Cunningham

