

Welcome to the ULWSA Communication Committee's first newsletter of 2024. With **Sara Tickler** as chair, and **Gail Rae** and **Tracy Hayes** in supporting roles, our goal is to share news of interest and serve as a conduit for timely communication between the board and our community.

NEWS & BRIEFS

Ston McDaniel and Doug Mallory have accepted appointment to the ULWSA Roads Committee, reestablished by charter on Jan. 20. The team will build on data gathered by the previous Roads Committee to develop a comprehensive repair and maintenance plan. "We are identifying high priority areas for immediate repair as the weather allows, while also working on a sustainable, long-term maintenance plan," says McDaniel, committee chair. "We encourage input from the community and would love to hear from you with any thoughts or suggestions. We look forward to working more closely with all owners to improve our roads and to keep them in a good serviceable condition!" He encourages anyone with relevant experience or simply a desire to serve to join. "There's a lot of road up here and we can use all the help we can get." Direct questions, concerns, or comments to the ULWSA board, or contact McDaniel directly at 307-920-3020 or ston@originalcraftsmen.com.

The ULWSA Social Committee led by Lynne Neuerburg with members Sheryl Weber, Teddy VanVelzer, Lynne Jones, Klaus Goodwin, and Shelby Phythian has a trio of events planned for spring. The fun kicks off with a **community litter clean-up Saturday, April 27**. Everyone is encouraged to pick up trash around their properties and along the roads within our community. A few weeks later, join your neighbors for the **Adopt-a-Highway clean-up Saturday, May 18**. ULWSA has taken responsibility for a roughly 2-mile stretch of Highway 26 extending up Mabel's Hill from just west of Union Pass. Completion of this year's spring and fall litter pickups will earn the ULWSA subdivision official recognition with a WYDOT sign on that portion of the highway. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the pull-off near Union Pass. Safety vests and heavy-duty trash bags will be provided. Bring your own gloves and grabbers! Test your skill (or luck) at a neighborhood **Rummikub tournament Saturday, May 25** at the home of Matt and Lynne Neuerburg, 19 Green River Drive. Games begin at 2:00, followed by a potluck at 5:00. Finally, it's not too early to start identifying items to sell at the first-ever **ULWSA Neighborhood Garage Sale June 28-29**. Email social@ulwsa.org if you'd like to participate.

The next ULWSA Board meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 24 at 6:00 p.m. MDT. As of this writing, the Board has tentatively adopted Google Meet for owners wanting to attend Board meetings remotely.



THE DUBOIS BADLANDS: MORE THAN JUST A GOOD VIEW

By Gail Rae

The cinematic spires and colorfully banded mesas that gift our community with one of the most awe-inspiring vistas on earth have a long history. *Very* long.

The otherworldly landscape is the result of two basic geological processes—deposition and erosion. The base layer of sediment, or Pierre Shale, was deposited some 75 million years ago by the Western Interior Seaway, an inland sea that split North America into two landmasses. The topmost layer, roughly 28 million years old, is the Sharps Formation. Rivers, wind, and rain took over about 500,000 years ago, beginning the process of erosion that gives the Badlands their distinctive peaks and drainages.

To protect the fragile environment, the Bureau of Land Management has designated 4,250 acres within the Badlands as a Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Additional support comes from the locally based Friends of Dubois Badlands (FoDB), and its mission “to unify the public toward understanding, appreciating, and protecting the unique features and resources of Dubois Badlands.”

ULWSA resident **Jennifer Hazeldine** is secretary of the group, which conducts annual outings including plant and bird inventories each spring and summer. “We did a bat walk last year with the Biodiversity Institute,” says Jennifer. “However, I believe we will only be doing that every

other year. We also have some great presentations lined up at the Dennison which we'll put information out for soon."

FoDB also plays an important role in maintaining the Badlands status as a WSA, Jennifer notes. "We have a volunteer agreement with the BLM to do monthly species monitoring and inventories...which BLM doesn't have the time or staff to do. We want to ensure the WSA is protected along with the Badlands that aren't part of the WSA."

Mark Hirschberger, a former USFS wildlife biologist (and full disclosure, my husband), offers another way to support the Badlands – by participating in a Wyoming Wilderness Association-hosted fence pull. "Since the designation of the WSA, many of these old fences aren't necessary, as they hinder wildlife movement and may cause injury and/or death," says Mark. Cutting and rolling up sections of the old, barbed wire is a fun way to be outdoors, meet like-minded people, and accomplish something worthwhile. FoDB will share details—and seek volunteers—when the date for the next pull is set.

Ready for a closer look? The Mason Draw Trail is an easy hike within the WSA, accessible from Kingfisher Road in Painted Hills. Having ridden the trail on horseback times, I've found it a great introduction to the area's topography, native plants, many animals. Whatever your interest in the Badlands, you'd better hurry: According to the Department of the Interior, scientists estimate that, an erosion rate of one inch every 10,000 years, in 500,000 years the Badlands will have eroded completely.

Visit friendsofduboisbadlands.org or join the Friends of Dubois Badlands group on Facebook for more info. FoDB memberships start at \$25.



MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: NANCY WOLF

Most every Upper Little Warm Springs resident has an interesting backstory. New ULWSA board member **Nancy Wolf** is no exception. Growing up in California, she saw the Beatles play Candlestick Park and snuck backstage at a Rollings Stones concert. (“Charlie and Mick both said hi before security kicked us out.”) She raised three sons and a daughter while working as a nurse practitioner in Oregon, discovered a passion for mental health, and eventually earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the University of Alabama Birmingham. In 2017, she and husband Malcolm made a life-changing motorcycle trip to Red Lodge, Montana, and liked it so much they decided to stay. Nancy found work as a nurse and mental health practitioner “across the border” at the Park County Jail in Powell, Wyoming, but the commute was a strain, so in 2019 they became Wyomingites. “We ended up in Powell three years,” she says, “but I missed the mountains. The older I get the more I want to live in nature.”



A state-wide search led the couple to Dubois and, in November 2022, their dream home on Soda Springs. “We sold our motorcycles and dumped all my retirement into this place,” she says. “It’s a work in progress but it’s perfect for us.” “Us” includes four dogs, a senior cat, and two recently arrived rescue kittens. Nancy’s work offering psychiatric evaluation, diagnosis, and management of mental health clients now includes online sessions with inmates in Park County and Colorado and weekly trips for in-person sessions at the Fremont County Jail in Lander. Nancy sees her role on the ULWSA board as “trying to bring people together. People need to have their questions answered. If I can communicate more, and make people feel more included, that will be success.” – *Tracy Hayes*

SPREAD THE WORD, STOP THE SPREAD



At first glance, they may appear pretty. But invasive non-native plants such as whitetop, spotted knapweed, and ox-eye daisy are designated as “noxious,” meaning they pose a threat to the environment by overtaking native species, degrading wildlife habitat, increasing soil erosion, and a host of other problems. Combatting the spread of thistle-like spotted knapweed in our area is a high priority of Fremont County Weed & Pest (FCWP), which will treat any infestations in our county with herbicides annually at no cost.

Unlike whitetop, which is already profuse in the Dubois area, spotted knapweed is not yet widespread. “The idea is to find it, treat it, and eradicate it before it becomes another whitetop,” says **Olivia Maxwell**, manager of FCWP’s Early Detect Rapid Response program. The infestation is believed to have started near the gravel pits, with seeds being spread as roads were graded. Upper Little Warm Springs has a large spotted knapweed infestation, she adds, particularly along Bachelor Creek Court. Anyone interested in having FCWP survey and treat their property for spotted knapweed or other high-priority invasive species can call the Lander office at 307-332-11052. “This is a free service,” Maxwell stresses, “but we won’t be successful without owner participation.” – *Tracy Hayes*