Events

**Bridger Plant Materials Center Field Day 2017**

It was a gorgeous day for the bi-annual Bridger Plant Materials Center Field Day held on Wednesday, June 14, and attended by about 65 producers, partners, Conservation District members, and NRCS staff. The weather was beautiful, and there was lots of great dialogue and interaction among participants.

Once again, a special note of thanks to the PMC Board of Managers and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana for sponsoring lunch, and to the University of Wyoming, Powell Research and Education Center for partnering and providing access to their amazing tour trailers! Additional heartfelt thanks to all the presenters who volunteered their limited time to speak including Mark Henning (Miles City area agronomist), Susan Tallman (Bozeman area agronomist), Casey Delphia (Montana State University entomologist), and Madeline Scianna (Montana State University intern). My personal thanks to Robert, Darren, Ross, and the summer help, for their many days of effort preparing for the day.
Feature

**Recent Montana-Wyoming Plant Materials Publications**

Several recent publications from the Montana-Wyoming Plant Materials program have been posted to the Montana NRCS and national Plant Materials websites.


*Ecology and Management of Invasive Knotweeds* (*Polygonum* spp.), MT Invasive Species Tech Note MT-34.

*How Seed Certification in Montana and Wyoming Improves the Success of NRCS Conservation Plantings*, Montana Plant Materials Technical Note MT-118.


*BPMC, Year 2017 Progress Report of Activities* (not currently posted).

Monica Pokorny, MT-WY Plant Materials Specialist

More Staffing Changes

**Ross Oyler Position Ends and Robert Kilian Retires**

![Ross Oyler combining seed.](image1)

![Ross with Willow Creek winter wheat.](image2)

The staffing changes at Bridger just keep coming! After eight years the term appointment for Ross Oyler ended on May 21, 2017. Ross served as a biological technician at the BPMC, and was an expert in several key areas of center operations, including wildland seed processing, row-crop cultivation, foundation seed production, and equipment fabrication, repair, and maintenance, to name a few. Ross was an excellent
problem solver, provided many innovative ideas, and has a keen sense of attention to detail. Ross was an essential part of the staff at Bridger, will be sorely missed, and we hope opportunities present themselves soon to have Ross return to the center.

Robert Kilian – “Outstanding in his field”               Robert (left) installing fence at Fort Keogh.

Robert Kilian, Rangeland Specialist, retired on September 29 after 30 years of federal service. Robert grew up in western Kansas and obtained a degree in Natural Resource Management with an emphasis in Range Ecology and Wildlife Habitat from Arizona State University. Robert, who is also a Navy veteran, began his professional career as an intern with Arizona Game and Fish. He was a soil conservationist with NRCS in field offices in Colville, Colfax, and Chelan, Washington. He was the rangeland management specialist in Okanogan, Washington and then the area rangeland management specialist in Grand Junction, Colorado before coming to Montana in 2003. He served as the rangeland management specialist in the Miles City area office from 2003 until 2015, covering as many as 16 counties. In 1994 he received a National Outstanding Self Development award, and in 2012 the National Plant Materials Special Service Award for his support of the Montana-Wyoming Plant Materials Program. He has been the Bridger Plant Materials Center rangeland specialist since 2015.

Anyone who has worked with Robert knows his conservation ethic, hard work, good nature, and extreme generosity. Montana NRCS and Plant Materials will indeed miss him.

Joe Scianna, Manager, Bridger PMC.
Field Plantings

Field Planting Evaluation, Sweet Grass County, MT.

Field Plantings are an opportunity for Plant Materials staff to collaborate with NRCS field offices on studies or demonstrations to provide information applicable to conservation. Many field plantings evaluate new plant species or planting technologies under a variety of soil, climatic, and land uses to assess their conservation potential under actual use conditions. In 2017, we evaluated 26 field plantings in Montana and Wyoming (13 per state). Field Planting Reports are a new format for sharing information, observations and evaluation results. They provide useful information on lessons learned for incorporating into future plantings. Check out our new field planting reports.

Monica Pokorny, MT-WY Plant Materials Specialist

Safety and Efficiency Tip

Using Dye When Spot Spraying Herbicides

Spot sprayed herbicide with blue dye.

One simple, easy step to ensure worker safety, improve application efficiency, and reduce application costs while spot spraying herbicides is to use dye. Dyes (or colorants) are inert, water-soluble products added to an herbicide solution to give it color (typically blue or red). By adding color, the applicator can
see where the solution has been applied, both on and off target. Depending on the amount of dye used, the color may remain for a few to several days before the sun and elements cause it to fade and disappear.

Dyes allow the applicator to make clothing, equipment, and other adjustments should color start appearing on the applicator. It also saves time and money by reducing the need to re- and over-apply herbicide (“did I cover that plant?”).

It should be noted that not all dyes are labeled for use with all chemicals, although some dye labels indicate they can be used with any pesticide when mixed and applied properly. As with any chemical application, read all labels thoroughly before mixing to ensure the products are compatible and can be applied safely and effectively.

Joe Scianna, Manager, Bridger PMC.

**Technician Tip**

**Small Seed Lot Cleaning Technique**

Each year the BPMC staff cleans approximately 150 to 200 individual lots of wildland and seed increase seed. Staff utilizes a variety of equipment to process seed, from simple screening devices to high-tech color-texture sorters that utilize a camera and software to identify and separate target from non-target seed.

In some cases, however, the fastest and most effective method of cleaning seed can be with the simplest technological approach. One example for small lots is pouring bulk seed over a textured surface (such as a woven cloth seed sack) glued to a flat surface (such as a piece of sheet metal). By maintaining the textured surface at an angle so the bulk seed flows downward across the surface, debris such as stems, floral parts, and non-target seed often sticks to the textured surface while the good seed flows across the

![Bulk uncleaned seed collection.](image1)

![Initial separation from chaff.](image2)

![Chaff retained on sack.](image3)
Clean seed lot

Surface. Effectiveness depends on the content of each bulk seed lot, but in many cases this is an excellent option for quickly cleaning small wildland collections. Trial and error with surface materials, such as using different types of cloth products, often improves how well the process works.

Darren Zentner, Farm Foreman, and Ross Oyler, former Biological Technician.