Introduction to the
Sheridan Research and Extension Center

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The Sheridan Research and Extension Center (ShREC) has active research and educational programs ongoing at its two locations: the historic station at Wyarno (east of Sheridan) and the Adams Ranch immediately south of the UW Watt Agriculture Center on the Sheridan College campus. With access to nearly 700 acres between the two locations, and improved research infrastructure, scientific activity at ShREC continues on an upward trajectory. Nearly 12,000 square feet of working space within the newly constructed greenhouse complex supports research and extension projects requiring a controlled growing environment.

ShREC continues to be driven by cooperative efforts of numerous regional partners to focus on our three emphasis areas—horticulture, forage management, and rangeland reclamation—as outlined in our strategic plan. We hope to provide an excellent learning experience for researchers, students, and clientele in the region.

Changes
In 2015, ShREC welcomed a new director, Brian Mealor, and a new assistant farm manager, Mike Albrecht. Mike brings a wealth of local knowledge and experience that will strengthen

Figure 1. ShREC employees, from left, Mike Albrecht, Rochelle Koltiska, Brian Mealor, Dan Smith, and Sadanand Dhekney.

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ShREC’s ability to facilitate research and maintain the productivity of fields not currently supporting a research project. Brian has been the University of Wyoming Extension weed specialist with statewide duties since 2009, and his background in rangeland restoration and weed management will complement current faculty expertise in the center’s three focus areas.

**Research and Education**

Although the total volume of research outputs is somewhat less than recent years, the quality of projects remains high. One of the growing strengths of ShREC is research into advanced plant breeding and biotechnology. The initial focus, and still the main emphasis, is on developing grape varieties suitable for Wyoming’s harsh climate; however, additional plant biotechnology projects, such as insect pest resistance in alfalfa and DNA sequencing of historic apple cultivars, are currently under way. Ongoing forage-research projects are evaluating the suitability of grass-legume mixtures for a diverse hay crop and the establishment of various perennial grasses under different planting regimes. A four-year study investigating how weed-management strategies impact reclamation success was recently completed at Wyarno.

ShREC has continued to serve as a location for hands-on learning. The center practically buzzes with activity during the field season, when undergraduate interns (including many Sheridan College students) gain experience in a number of different areas, and graduate students collect detailed field data for their research. ShREC has also served as the host venue for a number of extension and outreach activities, where the fruit tree pruning workshop has continued to gain momentum. At the suggestion of the ShREC Advisory Board, much of the produce to be served at the 2015 Field Day will be grown on the center and skillfully prepared by UW Extension’s Kentz Willis.

**Acknowledgments:** The research and educational efforts at ShREC are made possible by a number of cooperators, not the least of which includes the members of the ShREC Advisory Board. Their participation in establishing a vision for the center will have long-term impacts on the nature of information and programming in the ShREC service area. Special thanks to our employees, Dan Smith, Mike Albrecht, Rochelle Koltiska, and Sadanand Dhekney (Figure 1), along with University of Wyoming Extension educator Jeremiah Vardiman and cooperating researchers and educators for their continued commitment to the success of ShREC.

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