

FALL 2025

CAUSES THAT MATTER



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A Small Bird Has Big Impact

Loggerhead Shrike Research in Wyoming

Funding from the Butler Wyoming Nongame Wildlife Endowment

Imagine a songbird the size of a robin. It may not appear to be a voracious hunter, but it is! This clever little creature, the Loggerhead Shrike, has evolved to use human-made and natural objects when hunting. Loggerhead Shrikes don't have sharp talons like hawks or owls. Instead, they use fences and thorny branches as tools. They impale insects, frogs, lizards, and mice on barbed wire or thorns. Once the prey is stuck, they tear it apart with their hooked beaks to feed.

For over 10 years, researchers from Oklahoma State University (OSU) have been studying this small but mighty bird in Wyoming's Thunder Basin National Grassland.

Gary Butler, a retired Wyoming Game & Fish biologist, set up the Butler Fund at WYCF, supporting nongame wildlife species in Wyoming. This fund supports habitat conservation and research, so that important work like this can be boosted.

Studying Loggerhead Shrikes and learning why they matter is exactly what this fund was designed to do. The Loggerhead Shrike project has grown into one of the longest studies of its kind in the region.

Funding even allowed the team to add an extra field season in 2025, producing 11 years of data!

"These birds are what scientists call an 'indicator species,'" explains Holly



Todaro, a Ph.D. candidate and researcher on the OSU project. "That means their population trend tells us something important about the land they live on."

This research is important because we can learn more about the land, water, and way of life that so many Wyoming families depend on.

Holly describes Loggerhead Shrikes as "metal" and "charismatic."

These birds may be tough but aren't immune to their own challenges. Across North America, Loggerhead Shrikes populations are declining because of habitat loss, pesticides, and other pressures. When Loggerhead Shrikes struggle, it's often a sign that other animals in the same area are struggling too.

But they're adapting to struggles in a cool way.

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STATS & FACTS

Butler Wyoming Nongame Wildlife Endowment

Support for Nongame Wildlife Species within the state of Wyoming including but not limited to habitat conservation and restoration

Grant Amount:
\$4,998

Research:

Factors influencing spatial and temporal patterns of Loggerhead Shrike occupancy in Wyoming



Howdy, Pardners!

Enriching the Lives of Adults with Disabilities

Park County Area Opportunities Fund & Working for Wyoming Endowment Fund

Libraries offer a space to build community. Knitting groups meet; teen writing clubs learn together. And in the town of Cody, people can visit the Pardners Café in the Park County Library System's Cody Library for their morning Cup of Joe.

The Pardners Café is not your typical library coffee shop. It is run by the nonprofit Cody Pardners, an organization that enriches lives of adults with disabilities through work, recreation, and community. Pardners work side by side with mentors – making coffee and baked goods, ringing up customers, and washing dishes.

Thanks to a Wyoming Community Foundation (WYCF) grant, 15 Cody Pardners experience fulfilling work that they look forward to each day.

Kathy Liscum founded Cody Pardners to offer meaningful work experiences to adults like her son Colin, who has Down Syndrome.

“We want the Pardners to feel a sense of belonging through the work they do and the community they’re building,” says Kathy. “One of the Pardners told us ‘I don’t know what I’d be doing without the café. I have friends now.’”

Cody Pardners offers friendships and job opportunities to support each



Cody Pardners, their mentors, and former WYCF Board Chair, Steven Cranfill pose for a photo during a café tour.

Pardner's role as a vital member of the Cody community.

Because of your generosity, Cody Pardners is changing the lives of adults with disabilities.

Among other jobs, Cody Pardners work with the local tourism office to label travel brochures. The Pardners also make quality craft items to sell in the café. There are hopes to start a garden or small farm for Pardners to work on

and sell their produce. And soon they're looking to expand into Powell's Park County Branch Library with a mobile coffee cart.

“In the future, I want Cody Pardners to help build a residential community for adults with disabilities to live with their friends and families,” says Kathy. “A fully inclusive place that offers them community and recreational opportunities and the support they need to build fulfilling lives.”

For now, though, they'll continue to brighten and better their town of Cody.

“The smiles that greeted us during our visit were inspiring,” says WYCF Board Member, Kellie Clausen, who visited the café. “All of us deserve the sense of purpose that comes with productive work.”

STATS & FACTS

15 Pardners ranging from **18-51 years old**



30+ volunteers from the community



65% of customers are repeat

In the summer, serve tourists from all around the world



Serve **breakfast and lunch** Monday-Friday 9:00 AM-1:30 PM



Moods and Foods Tell Us Something

Checking in with the Boys & Girls Club of Campbell County

Campbell County Opportunities Fund

“If your mood were a food, what food would it be?”

That’s the question Brittney Locken, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Campbell County (BGCCC) often asks kids when they arrive. Instead of “How was your day?”, the question Brittney and her staff ask helps kids share how they really feel. Some say “hot Cheetos” when they’re upset, others say “birthday cake” when they feel happy. These answers help staff direct what kind of care or activity each child might need that day.

For 24 years, BGCCC has given kids in the community a safe place to go before and after school. “This isn’t just daycare,” Brittney says. “Kids are building character, learning healthy habits, and finding success in academics. They would not get this if they stayed at home—alone—before and after school.”

“Kids are building character, learning healthy habits, and finding success in academics.”

Parents agree. In responses to a survey sent by the Club, the top three reasons parents value the Club are:

- It’s a safe place for their kids.
- Kids have caring adults and mentors around them.
- Kids get to have fun!

Running the Club isn’t easy. Food prices are going up, staff need fair pay, and families rely on the Club for their kiddos. Despite these challenges, Brittney and her staff make it work.

Thanks to your support- a grant from the Wyoming Community Foundation helps keep BGCCC doors open.

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Other targeted programs at BGCCC include a newly renovated teen center.



Club members can participate in different programs throughout the year including: healthy habits, art projects, and STEM activities.

STATS & FACTS

BGCCC opened an agency fund with WYCF in **2003** to build a sustainable source of income for their organization.



Grant Amount:
\$10,000

BGCCC Mission:
To support all youth, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential.

In the 2024-2025 school year, the club served **over 200 kids** on average each day from ages 5-18.



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Researchers witnessed something that had never been recorded in scientific literature. “One pair of birds built a nest on a portable cattle corral instead of in natural vegetation,” says Holly. “They’re making use of human-made structures in new ways. That shows us how they can adapt as habitats change.”

Over the years, this long-term study has produced several scientific papers and new discoveries about how Loggerhead Shrikes live, nest, and survive in Wyoming. The findings will help guide future research and give conservationists better tools to protect grasslands for both wildlife and people.

For folks who live and work near Loggerhead Shrikes, these birds may

already be a familiar sight. Thanks to this project, we now know how important these “metal little birds” are for keeping grasslands healthy.



Loggerhead Shrikes build a nest in a man-made structure instead of a tree or bush like they normally would.

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“Without the Boys & Girls Club, our families wouldn’t have this much-needed service in our community,” Brittney says. “Your support makes our work possible.”



The Gardening Club at BGCCC teaches youth how to harvest crops and take care of their club garden.

Follow us on Social Media!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Wyoming Governor’s Business Forum
NOVEMBER 11-13, 2025 – Laramie, WY

Dubois Challenge!
Give now through December 31st!

Visit wycf.org/dubois to learn more.

Thank you! You’ve helped Wyoming communities thrive.

Across Wyoming, people like you have a unique chance to shape our communities for generations. Charitable giving is woven into the fabric of Wyoming life. Learn more about our “5 to Thrive” initiative and how you can leave a legacy for the causes you care about. Contact Rachel Bailey, Director of Philanthropy, at rachel@wycf.org.



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