

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

2016-2017

July 1, 2016- June 30, 2017

Sweetwater County Conservation District

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Rock Springs, WY 82901

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District Email: admin@swccd.us

District Website: www.swccd.us



<https://www.facebook.com/swccd>



Ground Breaking Ceremony – Project Site – Bitter Creek Drop Structure

Supervisors

Mary Thoman, Chairman	Rural Member
Tom Burris, Vice-Chairman	Rural Member
Jean Dickinson, Secretary	Urban Member
Henry Bliss, Treasurer	At-Large Member
Stephanie Anderson, Member	Rural Member

Associate Supervisors

Barbara VanMatre
Nick & Hillary Walrath

Technical Support Staff

Jeff Lewis, NRCS District Conservationist
Adam Clark, NRCS Soil Conservationist
Jennifer Dutton, FSA Staff
Teresa Wisniewski, FSA Staff
Dee Howell, NRCS IT

Fiscal Year 2017

The Annual Budget Hearing for the Sweetwater County Conservation District was held at 10 am, July 26, 2016, in the Conservation District Office.

Anticipated Expense

Administration	\$103,900.00
Operations:	\$164,220.00
Indirect Costs	\$ 20,600.00
State & Federal Grants	\$374,250.00
Foundation	\$ 85,409.00
Tree Program	<u>\$ 300.00</u>
Total	\$748,679.00

Anticipated Revenue

Estimated Cash Available	\$ 36,816.00
State Revenue	\$ 55,612.00
Federal Grant	\$318,638.00
Local Revenue	\$288,720.00
Foundation	\$ 85,409.00
Tree Program	\$ 1,000.00
Savings Interest	<u>\$ 50.00</u>
Total	\$786,245.00

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The Top Three Priorities for the Sweetwater County Conservation District are:

1. Water Quality

Bitter Creek and Killpecker Creek Watershed

The ultimate project goal is to gather water quality and other resource data, assess the data, and implement strategies designed to address watershed related water quality impairment issues that were identified in the Bitter Creek and Killpecker Creek Watershed Plan. Successfully achieving the goal will allow the removal of the streams from the State of Wyoming, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Water Quality Division (WQD) listing of impaired streams (303d list). This goal includes implementing actual on-the-ground activities such as implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), which result in improved water quality. The goal also includes regulatory activities to officially and legally acknowledge the natural conditions of the streams. The Bitter and Killpecker Creeks Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG) is the lead advisory and management organization for this project.

Objective

- 1) Determine if BMPs are effectively improving water quality
- 2) Determine what additional BMPs should be implemented
- 3) Document changes in water quality since the comprehensive watershed study of 2006
- 4) Continue to work with WDEQ in the development of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

Action Items:

- 1) Establish updated and credible data in a useable format
- 2) Educate the public on stream health and best management practices
- 3) Continue to have data analyzed by professionals in the field
- 4) Provide educational materials to the public regarding water quality concerns
- 5) Establish and maintain water-monitoring legacy sites
- 6) Encourage landowners to utilize pipelines, gated pipe, turbulent fountains, pivots and other irrigation efficient conservation practices
- 7) Continue work with the steering committee to target water quality efforts
- 8) Promote landscaping practices as advanced landscaping alternatives
- 5) Continue to work with WDEQ Section 319 Grant Proposal Project
- 9) Continue to work on access agreements for landowners to collect credible water quality data

The District will implement the following tasks to monitor water quality changes:

- 1) The BKWAG, the District, the County, and the NRCS will continue, and attempt to expand, the cost-Share programs for BMP is addressing water quality by providing the technical assistance to apply for funds and documenting resource concerns
- 2) The District will continue to work on best management practices to improve water quality
- 3) The District will provide water quality data to outlying communities and all sewer and water districts within the watershed

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- 4) The District will provide an interactive booth at community events highlighting the water quality of Bitter and Killpecker Creeks and emphasizing water quality
 - 5) The District will provide a map in conjunction with the City and County, indicating storm water drainages into Bitter Creek and Killpecker Creek
 - 6) The District will provide support for the Bitter Creek Beautification Project by assisting the City of Rock Springs in the implementation of this project
 - 7) The District will provide a brief synopsis of the plan and update Sweetwater County residents on watershed activities in their newsletter and in progress editions of local newspapers
 - 8) The District will develop an Annual Report of Progress regarding the watershed project and make available to watershed residents and the WDEQ
 - 9) The District will create links on the Sweetwater County Conservation District website to serve as a source of information on water quality issues for residents and maintain the sites with current data
 - 10) The BKWAG will continue to meet at least once a year, if needed, to review progress of this watershed plan, and provide input on the District's water quality program
 - 11) The District, in coordination with the BKWAG, will collect credible water quality data to illustrate effects of implementation and gain understanding of background conditions

- Bitter Creek Drop Structure Project

The Bitter Creek Drop Structure Project is currently under construction with a December 31 or January 15, 2017 completion date. The project will provide a new drop-type structure to replace, in a new location, the existing structure. The project is located about 15 miles east of Rock Springs. The new structure will help keep flows in the creek and decrease and significant change in the flow of water through the City of Rock Springs

The SWCCD secured grants with the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. (WDEQ). Desert Fish Partnership Grant, Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation and the Sweetwater County Commission supports the project and has provided money for grant match

- Big Sandy and Little Sandy Watersheds

- The District is participating with the Sublette County Conservation District to provide on-going water quality data in the Big Sandy and Little Sandy Watersheds

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- Water Development
 - The District applied for a Level One Watershed Study with the Wyoming Water Development Office
If successful the District will be able to sponsor small water projects in the Bitter Creek Watershed and the east side of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area
 - The SWCCD is working with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Uinta County Conservation District (UCCD) to provide on-going water monitoring of the Blacks Fork River and Henry's Fork Wetlands

2. Soil Surveys

- Objective

The Sweetwater County Soil survey encompasses 6.59 acres, or 98% of Sweetwater County. NRCS have completed 1.8 million acres of the soil survey area, or 28%.
Total Acres - 6,590,885.7
Acres Mapped - 1,801,575.0
Acres Not Mapped - 4,789,310.7

 - Products will include
 - Improved maps and knowledge of the distribution of U.S. carbon stocks
 - Soil survey databases, selectable by land use and management, on soil carbon levels and related properties
 - Land use and management based data that will help conservation planning by estimating gains or losses of soil carbon from land use and management changes
 - Publically accessible soil carbon databases for model development and validation

3. Land Planning

- Objective
 - Improve or maintain natural resources for the benefit of domestic livestock, wildlife, watersheds, water quality, wetlands and riparian areas, recreation, and other uses important to Sweetwater County
 - Provide for private and public involvement on public land regarding natural resource management decisions
 - Allow for decisions to be made focusing on what is good for the resource rather than what is good for a single interest group
- Action Items
 - USDOJ – Bureau of Land Management
 - State Office
 - Energy Gateway South Transmission Line
 - Gateway West Transmission Line
 - Transwest Express Transmission Line
 - Hydraulic Fracturing Rule
 - Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement
 - Sage Brush Focal Area Withdrawal

Rock Springs Field Office

- Rock Springs Resource Management Plan (RMP)
- Big Sandy Working Group – biannual monitoring
- Conversions, Allotment plans
- Wild Horses RMP Amendments
- Hiawatha Regional Energy Development Project Programmatic Agreement
- Lost Creek Uranium Recovery Project *In Situ Mine*
- Grazing permit Renewals
- Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Plan
- Riley Ridge to Natrona Project
- Monell Arch Oil & Gas Development Project
- Desolation Road Project

Kemmerer Field Office

- Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (RMP)
- Moxa Arch EIS
- Gateway West Transmission Line
- Seedskadee Revocation Project
- Chokecherry Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project

Rawlins Field Office

- Rawlins Resource Management Plan (RMP)
- Continental Divide-Creston EIS
- Reclamation Policy
- Grizzly and Daley Allotment Management Plan and MOU
- RMP – Visual Resource Management Plan and Amendment
- Riley Ridge to Natrona Project

Pinedale Field Office

- Pinedale Resource Management Plan
- LaBarge Platform EIS
- Travel Management Plan
- Normally Pressurized Lance Natural Gas Development Project
- Wyoming Sage Grouse Amendment
- Bird Canyon Oil & Gas Project

Lander Field Office

- Lander Resource Management Plan
- Grazing permit renewals

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- Bureau of Reclamation
 - Seedskadee Revocation Project
- USDA – Natural Resource Conservation Service
 - Henry’s Fork Salinity Irrigation EIS
- USDA – National Forest Planning Processes
 - Bridger Teton National Forest
 - Bridger-Teton L&RMP revision
 - Travel management plan
 - Related projects
 - Ashley National Forest
 - Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area and Dam/appeal of travel managements plan/comments on grazing permit renewals
 - Ashley National Forest Revision Process
- Governor’s Office
 - Governor’s consistency review for the Oil Shale and Tar Sands Final Programmatic EIS
 - Governor of Wyoming Energy Strategy
 - Governor’s Executive Order on Sage Grouse
- Meet with USGS, Ag Commission, CD, Dept of Ag, Grazing Board
 - Gain Information on what Science USGS can provide for ranching perspectives
 - Meet with BLM area managers, range staff from BLM, Dept of Ag, and CD concerning permit renewals
 - Open doors and share ideas and concerns
 - State Grazing Board

Local Governments

Sweetwater County

- The District provides comments for Sweetwater County subdivision reviews

City of Rock Springs

- Update and inform the City of Rock Springs the latest findings and review progress of the watershed plan, provide input on the District’s water quality program and the status of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program- slated for Spring 2017
- Partner with the Trees for Recycles Day held every Arbor Day in Rock Springs
- Update and inform the City of Rock Springs through the BKWAG the latest findings and review progress of the watershed plan, and provide input on the District’s water quality program

Coalition of Local Governments (CLG)

- Continue working with land and natural resource plans and projects through continued coordination with Coalition of Local Governments
- Review federal plan and projects and provide credible comments for the federal administrative record

Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) – provide input for projects and the process.

- The WLCI is a long-term science based effort to assess and enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitats at a landscape scale in southwest Wyoming, while facilitating responsible development through local collaboration and partnerships. The WLCI is an interagency working group of partners that is beginning the process of establishing a much larger coalition of government and non-government organizations. Local Project Development Teams identify local issues that are important to the landscape and cooperatively create projects to address identified needs for local wildlife, habitat, and other resource issues. Each Local Project Development Team includes local biologists, range managers, conservation districts, landowners, county commissioners, and other interested parties. The WLCI has four teams that are located geographically <http://www.wlci.gov/>
- Upper Green Flaming Gorge (Tri-State) Watershed MOU
The upper Green River Flaming Gorge Watershed is to ensure uniform delivery of NRCS programs across state and conservation district boundaries, in a consistent manner related to those producers with property in the identified Upper Green Flaming Gorge (Tri-State) Watershed. This MOU is to promote and serve conservation in the watershed area where the watershed crosses state boundaries and do so in a way that the technical assistance to the watershed and customers in this watershed appears seamless and without regard to state boundaries.

4. Community Education and Outreach

- Objective
 - To promote activities and programs increasing community awareness of conservation district activities and programs
 - To work towards building strong public knowledge. To provide a friendly and visible resource to our local community for conservation information and assistance
- Action Items
 - Continue to work with NRCS staff and help to continue with the Local Work Group and address local resource concerns
 - Commence work with Sweetwater County schools and emphasize water quality
 - Develop and sponsor educational and interactive booths at local events
 - Offer education incentives to students interested in pursuing greater resource knowledge
 - Sponsor educational workshops, tours, and conferences and heighten awareness of natural resource issues, concerns, and District projects
 - Use local and regional news organizations to educate and inform the public of conservation efforts and concerns

5. Seedling Tree Program - Offer and promote seedling trees to qualified customers

- Objective
 - Promote and establish tree planting for energy conservation, soil erosion reduction, environmental benefits, and wildlife
 - Assist customers with species selection, planting concerns, seedling tree applications and informational materials
 - Provide a variety of trees, shrubs and seedlings for windbreaks and shelterbelts

6. Administrative

- Objective
 - To meet WDA and WACD administrative guidelines and requirements and to ensure that all Sweetwater County Conservation District programs are carried out in a timely and fiscally responsible manner
 - To meet WDA, WDEQ and Bureau of Land Management grant requirements and reporting
 - To meet County funding requirements

- Action Items
 - Comply with WDA and WACD financial policies in order to receive state funding
 - Develop and maintain accurate and legal District budget each fiscal year
 - Provide the Board of Supervisors accurate and timely financial information so that they can make appropriate decisions
 - Administrate daily, monthly, quarterly, annual reports and plans for the District
 - Coordinate all information disbursements to Board Members, Associate Members, Resource advisors, and local committees
 - Attend regular monthly Board of Supervisor meetings, Area Meetings, Conventions, committee meetings, staff meetings, and various applicable training to make sure public is aware of these meeting and to encourage public participation in these meetings
 - Maintain District files and daily business
 - Complete financial reviews and audits
 - Continue all efforts in conjunction with Cooperative Agreements established with the district
 - Provide, evaluate, and participate in staff training
 - Provide opportunities for development for staff and board members
 - Attend meetings and trainings to increase knowledge of natural resources and to stay informed of local, state, and national conservation issues
 - Research and obtain funding sources for District programs and local project concerns
 - Complete all grant funding projects and administer timely grant reporting
 - Maintain and update District's Website and Facebook page
 - Provide ongoing computer and information system support for the District