



Seedskae National Wildlife Refuge

*Sweetwater County Conservation District*

*2022 Annual Report  
& 2023 Plan of Work*



550 Uinta Drive  
Suite E  
Green River, WY 82935  
(307) 875-4995

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## OUR VISION

The Sweetwater County Conservation District envisions the needs of their communities today, tomorrow, and into the future, and to help protect, conserve, and enhance natural resources.

## Mission Statement

The Mission of the Sweetwater County Conservation District is to provide for conservation of the soil, and soil and water resources of this county, and for the control and prevention of soil erosion and for flood prevention or the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, and thereby to stabilize ranching and farming operations, to preserve natural resources, protect the tax base, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, preserve wildlife, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the this County.

(Ref.: Wyoming Statutes Title 11. Agriculture, Livestock and Other Animals § W.S. 11-16-103 et seq.)

## Board Meetings

Board Meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at 4:00 p.m.

550 Uinta Drive Ste E  
Green River, WY 82935



*Western Meadowlark*

## Board of Supervisors

### Elected Supervisors

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



### 2021 Wyoming Statute [Wyo. Stat. § 11-16-122](#)

#### Title 11 - Agriculture, Livestock and Other Animals

#### Chapter 16 - Conservation Districts

#### Section 11-16-122 - Powers and Duties of Districts and Supervisors Thereof Generally.

(viii) Cooperate, including but not limited to representing the conservation district as a cooperating agency with special expertise as provided by the National Environmental Policy Act and in federal land planning implementation as provided in W.S. 11-16-135(a), enter into agreements with and furnish financial or other aid to, any agency, governmental or otherwise, or any owner or occupier of lands within the district, in carrying on range management or erosion control and prevention operations and works of improvement for flood prevention or the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water within the district, subject to such conditions as the supervisors deem necessary;

The people of Sweetwater County elect the five-member Board of Supervisors to the District during the general election by popular vote. The elected members represent both the rural and urban populations within Sweetwater County. The district supervisors are the only locally elected board specifically charged with the responsibility of representing the citizens of Sweetwater County on natural resource issues. A conservation district supervisor serves the community voluntarily. The District Board of Supervisors administers and implements projects and programs funded through local, state, federal, and private partnerships. Board meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month and are open to the public. Associate Supervisors are also an important part of the District. They are citizens interested in the important role of conservation districts and volunteer their time to attend meetings and provide valuable input, however, they are non-voting members



Boars Tusk

## Administration



Karen Pecheny, District Administrator

The SWCCD staff oversees the day-to-day operations of the conservation district.

Represents the District and voices the District's opinion as designated by the Board of Supervisors.

### *How Districts Operate:*

**About Us:** The Sweetwater County Conservation District was originally called the Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District, which was organized in September of 1960 at the request of local citizens for the purpose of conserving the soil, water, and all other natural resources and to promote and maintain the welfare of the people in the district. The Secretary of State signed a certificate of the first Inclusion of Additional Territory within the boundary of the Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District in November of 1969. Other boundary changes were made and, in 1974, the Secretary of State filed a certificate to include all of Sweetwater County in the Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District. In late August of 2002, the Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District name was changed to the Sweetwater County Conservation District.

### Why are Conservation Districts Important Today?

Conservation Districts were formed in the beginning to allow local citizens many opportunities to help guide and develop conservation programs in each county by working at the "grass roots" level, the most important vantage point for identifying problems, finding solutions and developing and implementing programs. Today, more so than half a century ago, Conservation Districts are a valuable resource to face the challenges posed by natural resource use and management.

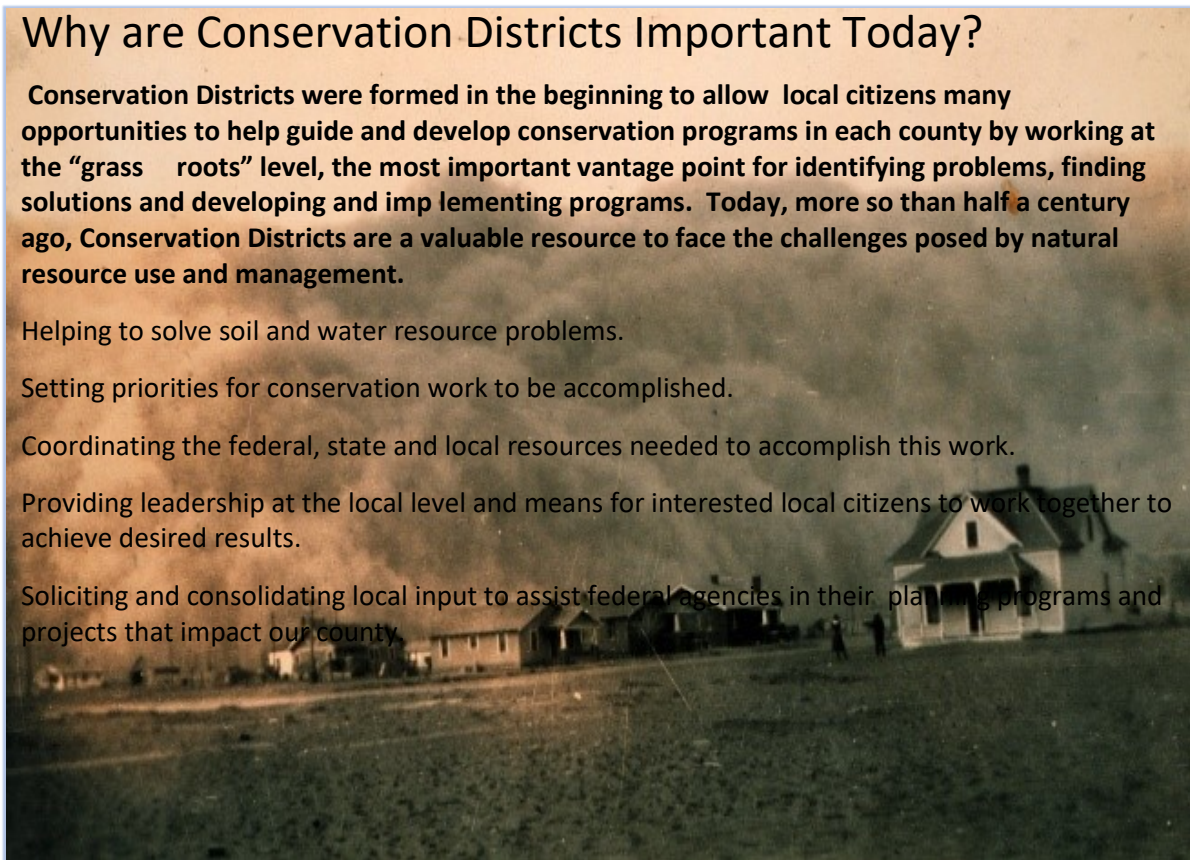
Helping to solve soil and water resource problems.

Setting priorities for conservation work to be accomplished.

Coordinating the federal, state and local resources needed to accomplish this work.

Providing leadership at the local level and means for interested local citizens to work together to achieve desired results.

Soliciting and consolidating local input to assist federal agencies in their planning programs and projects that impact our county.



## District Operations

### Bitter and Killpecker Creek Water Quality Monitoring

The Sweetwater County Conservation District continued assessment work within the Bitter Creek Watershed in 2021-22 in accordance with recommendations from the Bitter Creek Watershed Based Plan. (BCWBP). Project oversight is by the Bitter and Killpecker Creek Watershed Assessment Group (BKWAG) which is comprised of individuals representing both government and private interests within the watershed. The SWCCD has retained EDE Consultants LLC of Sheridan, Wyoming (EDE) since 2003 to perform monitoring and reporting tasks for the project.



Russ Hamilton and Mitch Nelson, EDE Consultants

### Big and Little Sandy Rivers Water Quality Monitoring

Activities and Progress- The Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) has been monitoring surface water on the Big and Little Sandy Rivers in both Sublette and Sweetwater counties since 2008. Two sites have been established on each river, where chemical, biological and physical data are collected. The Sublette County Conservation District (SCCD) collects chemical samples five times per year and aquatic insects in the fall. The district has established a partnership with the Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD), where the SCCD provides the manpower to conduct the monitoring and the SWCCD splits the cost of the monitoring efforts. The Little Sandy River was placed initially on Wyoming's 303(d) List in 1996 for not supporting its cold-water fisheries and aquatic life, other than fish and uses below Elkhorn Junction.

### Bitter Creek Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG)

The BKWAG meets once a year to discuss water quality, water quality sampling and receive updates on the watershed plan implementation, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) progress and development, City of Rock Springs updates from the Bitter Creek and Killpecker Creek Watershed Management Plan and Implementation Project, The 2021 Annual Report and the Bitter Creek Watershed Based Plan are both available on the district's website at: [www.swccd.us/bitter-creek-watershed.php](http://www.swccd.us/bitter-creek-watershed.php)



Bitter Creek

## Bitter and Killpecker Creek Water Quality Update

The Bitter Creek watershed is situated within the Green River drainage basin in southwestern Wyoming, encompasses 2,229 square miles, and is located entirely within, and in the center of, Sweetwater County.

SWCCD continues to proceed with implementation of the Bitter Creek Watershed-Based Plan. EDE Consultants made site visits to 11 historic site locations and collected water quality samples at 7 project sites on Bitter and Killpecker Creek in May and June 2022.

At the sites sampled, E. coli concentrations in June were greatest in the center of Rock Springs, suggesting anthropogenic origin. Chloride concentrations in Killpecker Creek remain high and chloride in Bitter Creek were within historic norms, except at BC-10 -which was over twice what has been seen in the past.

WDEQ designates Bitter & Killpecker Creeks within Rock Springs as primary contact recreation areas based on proximity to populated areas. The primary (ingestion or immersion) contact standard must be met during the summer recreation (May through September) The secondary (incidental or accidental) contact standards applies the remainder of the year. A summary of E. coli concentrations within Rock Springs, recorded during 2004. Based on observations, regarding observed E. coli concentrations and WDEQ E. coli standards, advertising and/or posting public advisories on potential health risks of contacting Bitter and Killpecker Creek water within Rock Springs may be appropriate. Advisories may be prudent in areas where the creeks are adjacent to residential dwellings or have unrestricted public access near parks or along walkways or in other areas where people or pets may contact the stream water.



Bitter Creek West Center Restoration

For more information and data go to [2022-Rock-Springs-Bitter-Creek-Channel-Reconstruction.pdf \(swccd.us\)](#)

## Land Planning

### Coalition of Local Governments (CLG)

SWCCD is heavily involved in federal land planning and meets once a month to discuss and review federal plans and projects. The CLG consists of two county commissions as well as six conservation districts. (Uinta, Lincoln, Sweetwater, Sublette, Star Valley, Little Snake River Conservation District)

### Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Seventy Percent of Sweetwater County is public land and the District works closely with five BLM Field Offices: Rock Springs, Kemmerer, Rawlins, Pinedale and Lander.

Comments are made on the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Travel Management Plan, Sage Grouse 9 Plan, USFS and BLM Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)'s and Environmental Assessments (EA)'s for grazing, mineral, wind and solar development.

### Subdivision Reviews

The District has 60 days to review and comment on a proposed subdivision review. Within this review, the District considers soil suitability, erosion control, sedimentation, and flooding problems. This information is used to inform the local Planning & Zoning staff and County Commissioners of natural resource concerns specific to the development.

### Land & Resource Use Plan & Policy 2020-2025

SWCCD has updated its Land & Resource Use Plan & Policy for 2020- 2025, based on results from comments and input from the Board.

The Sweetwater County Conservation District developed the Sweetwater County Conservation District Land and Resource Use Plan and Policy ("Plan") to translate its statutory mandate into land management policy and direction. The Plan identifies and applies goals, objectives, and policies to the state and federal regulatory framework that governs the management of private, state, and federal land and the rangeland, soil, water, and wildlife resources. The Plan will guide County, private, state, and federal decision makers in addressing federal and state natural resource management issues.

[2015 - 2020 SWCCD Land & Resource Use Plan & Policy](#)





## Local Work Group

The Local Work Group (LWG) priorities (for Natural Resource Conservation Service Technical Committee guidance) and local Resource Advisory Committee (LRAC) (the natural resource guidance to SWCCD)

The Local Work Group decided to keep the same resource concerns for 2022.

Grazing Lands Management – Forest and Woodland Health – Watershed Health

Invasive Species – Soil Health

Irrigation Watershed Management - Streambank -Riparian Health – Water Quality



## Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) and Little Snake River Conservation District (LSRCD) Boundary Change

After many years of discussion by both Boards, the two conservation districts made a boundary change. The transfer of lands to LSRCD will be beneficial to better facilitate the delivery of conservation practices and achieve the mission of conservation districts in Sweetwater County. The area in Sweetwater County that is currently being used by ag producers have their base operation in the LSRCD Office. SWCCD had been fully or partially reimbursing the LSRCD for their services and the areas in Sweetwater County may be more easily serviced by the LSRCD due to proximity to their office. Both boards believe the boundary change will help implement resource improvement activities; including wildlife, wild horse management, grazing and water development and by working jointly on natural resource projects and still provide the best service to our constituents.



SWCCD Board Chairman Tom Burriss and LSRCD Board Chairman Jack Cobb

Board Members from SWCCD and LSRCD



### Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) Small Water Project Program (SWPP)

The Small Water Project Program is an annual grant program administered by the Wyoming Water Development Commission in partnership with sponsoring entities across the state, including Sweetwater County Conservation District. The grants aim to improve watershed condition and function to benefit rangeland, cropland, agriculture, livestock, wildlife, and habitat. In 2022, SWCCD completed one Wyoming Water Development Small Water Project in

the Big Sandy (small water project ditch diversion picture) Watershed. Estimated cost \$6,449.75.

## Meetings and Conventions

### Area V Meeting –

The Area V Meeting was hosted by the Star Valley Conservation District on September 11, 2021 in Afton. Lincoln, Little Snake, Star Valley, Sublette, Sweetwater, Teton and Uinta County Conservation Districts attended the training.



Lower Swift Restoration Project in Star Valley

The group did a tour of the Lower Swift Restoration Project. The agenda included updates from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Wyoming Department of Agriculture. Presentations from the State Engineers Office on water rights and discussions on carbon resolutions. Karen Pecheny, staff attended virtually.

## Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) 2021 Convention

The Annual Convention was held in Cody, November 29 - December 1. Bill Schell won Teacher of the Year and the key note speaker was resilience speaker and author Jim Davidson. (pictured below) Tom Burris, Supervisor and Karen Pecheny, staff attended. Bill Shell won Teacher of the Year.



Bill Schell



Jim Davidson, author

## Community Enhancement Grants

The Sweetwater County Conservation District accepted three applications for the Community Enhancement Grant Program. Applications can be written for any amount up to \$5,000. The grant program provides a great opportunity for local groups and organizations to allow their members to serve the community and make it a better place to live. SWCCD offers these grants in an effort to increase community awareness and promote sound resource stewardship.



This year the District accepted a grant from the Green River FFA Program through School District #2 To build an Agriculture/Natural Resources Learning Facility: This school-based agriculture/natural resources learning facility will provide a location for FFA students to house and raise individual SEA (supervised agriculture education) projects including: market swing, market lambs, market goats, and market steers. The facility will provide students with the opportunity to apply concepts learned in a classroom to a real-life project.

The District accepted a grant from **Simply Sunshine Nursery** for the purchase of a soil mixer. The mixer will create a better soil for students of all ages to work with and really get their hands into quality dirt with way less production mess as they are instructed in class. The Nursery has plans for students to work with dirt, learn the process of seed growth and teach classes on gardens, baskets, beds and decorative gardens. They also plan to teach a class at the Rock Springs Jr. High and Walnut Elementary on perennials.



**The City of Rock Springs Parks Department** was successful in securing a grant to purchase and install dog bag dispensers in the City of Rock Springs right of ways. The locations were identified in a report from EDE Consultants to address management measures in the Bitter Creek watershed to mitigate contributions to E coli concentrations and assist with implementing pet waste best management practices. The public will benefit from having the additional pet waste locations for their use, but have the ability to control the reduction of E coli contamination. The District congratulates all this year's recipients and believe they beneficial to the public and promote sound resource stewardship.

## Native Tree Sales



Every fall the SWCCD brings landowners a wide selection of native trees and shrubs for their landscape and conservation needs. These native trees are a good choice for projects because they are uniquely suited to our soils, weather, and repelling pests. These trees have unique and crucial relationships with the insects, pollinators, and birds our ecosystem depends on. For the 2022 sale the District sold a total of 1,065.00 trees and shrubs.

The purpose of the program is to encourage tree planting around the county to create wind barriers to protect buildings and livestock, serve as snow fences and provide shelter for wildlife. Trees can also be used to stabilize stream banks, reduce noise, and provide shade, control erosion and moisture in an area that might otherwise run off through creeks and rivers.



## Green River Arbor Day Event

**“Plant a tree”** Arbor Day Tree Giveaway 2022: The City of Green River celebrated Arbor Day on May 19 at Expedition Island. The event was held inside this year at the Pavilion (due to inclement weather). Folks still stopped by for a free tree sapling. Sponsored by the Green River Tree Board.

## 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Trees for Recyclables

For the 26<sup>th</sup> year in a row the Rock Springs Ray Lovato Recycling Center hosted “Trees for Recyclables Day” The event was held in May and is partnered with the Sweetwater County Conservation District. Area residents are able to take advantage of free trees. (Family bringing in recyclables for trees)



# 2023 PLAN OF WORK

## Board of Supervisors and Staff

|                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Tom Burris, Chairman          | Rural Member    |
| Stephanie Anderson, Secretary | Rural Member    |
| Jean Dickinson, Treasurer     | Urban Member    |
| Larry Folks, Member           | Rural Member    |
| Henry Bliss, Member           | At-Large Member |

## Staff

|                |                        |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Karen Pecheny, | District Administrator |
|----------------|------------------------|

## Associate Supervisors

|                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Randy Shipman   | Rock Springs, WY |
| Rick Breininger | Green River, WY  |

## Technical Support Staff

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Jeff Lewis, NRCS District Conservationist  | Natural Resource Conservation Service |
| Courtney Thomas, NRCS Soil Conservationist | Natural Resource Conservation Service |
| Mike Ivers, NRCS Engineer                  | Natural Resource Conservation Service |
| Dee Harbach Acting, Executive Director,    | USDA Farm Service Agency              |
| Sadie St. Clair-Valdez, FSA Staff          | USDA Farm Service Agency              |
| Hillary Walrath, Salinity Coordinator      | Natural Resource Conservation Service |

## Conservation District partners

With many local and statewide groups and professional organizations. Which includes the following:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| City of Rock Springs/Green River        | Sweetwater County Weed & Pest                    |
| U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)   | Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)     |
| Bureau of Land Management (BLM)         | Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) |
| Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) | Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD)          |
| Wyoming Water Development Commission    | University of Wyoming (UW) (WWDC)                |
| Muley Fanatic Foundation (MFF)          | Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality      |
| Coalition of Local Governments (CLG)    | Sweetwater County Commissioners (SWCO)           |
| USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)          | Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts    |
| Wyoming Water Development Commission    | Wyoming State Forestry                           |

Sweetwater County Conservation District would like to thank all of our cooperators, agencies and organizations that have been instrumental in assisting the District with carrying out its programs and activities throughout the year. We appreciate all their support.

Here are some of our District Partners!

Justin Caudill, WDA



Dennis Doncaster, BLM



Randy Shipman SWCCD,  
Associate Supervisor



Rick Breninger, SWCCD,  
Associate Supervisor

## Financial Management

District funding sources include county appropriations, federal and state grants, and the annual spring tree sales. Conservation District Directors are responsible for developing funding sources for the operations of the Conservation District and for the conduct of programs focused on solving resources issues. SWCCD appreciates the support from the Sweetwater County Commissioners.

### Fiscal Year 2022 Budget

The Annual Budget Hearing for the Sweetwater County Conservation District was held at 10 a.m. July 17, 2021, at the Conservation District Office.

| <u>Expenditures</u> |                     | <u>Revenue</u>  |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Administration      | \$77,000.00         | Local Revenue   | \$221,160.00        |
| Operations          | \$120,160.00        | State Revenue   | \$34,349.00         |
| Indirect Costs      | \$24,000.00         | Tree Revenue    | \$1,000.00          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>\$221,160.00</b> | <b>Subtotal</b> | <b>\$256,509.00</b> |
|                     |                     | Cash on Hand    | <u>\$32,413.00</u>  |
|                     |                     | <b>Total</b>    | <b>288,922.00</b>   |

### Fiscal Year 2023 Budget

The Annual Budget Hearing for the Sweetwater County Conservation District was held at 10 am, July 13, 2022, at the Conservation District Office.

| <b>Anticipated Expense</b> |                     | <b>Anticipated Revenue</b> |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Administration             | \$76,600.00         | Estimated Cash Available   | \$36,155.00         |
| Operations:                | \$120,160.00        | State Revenue              | \$71,502.00         |
| Indirect Costs             | \$ 24,400.00        | Foundation                 | \$59,397.00         |
| State Grants               | \$71,502.00         | Local Revenue              | \$221,160.00        |
| Foundation                 | \$59,397.00         | Tree Program               | \$ 1,000.00         |
| <u>Tree Program</u>        | <u>\$ 1,000.00</u>  | <u>Savings Interest</u>    | <u>\$ 10.00</u>     |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>\$353,059.00</b> | <b>Total</b>               | <b>\$389,224.00</b> |

## Top Priorities for the Sweetwater County Conservation District

### 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 the 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.

Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) has conducted monitoring from 2004 through 2021, currently under the Bitter Creek Watershed-Based Plan (BCWBP) [2021 SWCCD Bitter Creek Watershed Final Based Plan](#)) Monitoring is done to review impairment listings, catalog water quality and quantity and stream channel conditions, and assess management measure (MM) implementation locations and effectiveness. Project oversight is by the Bitter and Killpecker Creek Watershed Assessment Group (BKWAG) which includes representatives of government and private interests within the watershed. SWCCD has used EDE Consultants LLC of Sheridan, Wyoming (EDE) to conduct project monitoring, data review, and reporting tasks since 2003.

The Bitter Creek Watershed Based Plan is an implementation plan has been developed that outline management measures that the SWCCD and the Bitter Creek Killpecker Creek Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG) may take to initiate water quality improvement projects over a seven-year period (through 2027). As part of the district's management measures that are included in the Watershed-Based Plan, the Sweetwater County Conservation District will be conducting water quality sampling in September 2022 and spring 2023 on project legacy sites upstream, within and downtown of Rock Springs. Legacy sites will be on Bitter Creek and Killpecker Creek.

Implementation of the City of Rock Spring's Reconstruction Plan for Bitter Creek may assist SWCCD in achieving several watershed improvement goals. The city's reconstruction plan addresses Bitter Creek channel improvement within the city from the Sweetwater Creek confluence to the east South Side Belt Route Bridge. The plan is proposed to be implemented in four segments with the first segment (implementation underway) being from the Sweetwater Creek confluence to the west South Side Belt Route Bridge. SWCCD will maintain contact with the city during and following the channel improvement work to help to identify, assess, and assist in implementing best management practices (BMP) related to the reconstruction which may help achieve the goals of the SWCCD Bitter Creek Watershed-Based Plan (BCWBP). BMP that may relate to the channel reconstruction work include:(Installing pet waste collection stations along project walking paths)

The SWCCD should continue to proceed with implementation of BCWBP MM and attempt to complete MM in the timeframes scheduled. This will be contingent on annual budget allocations and the availability of other funding sources. Other work to collect data beneficial to understanding the watershed regime should be considered opportunistically, such as continuing observation of stream conditions at historic project sites, and interfacing with WDEQ on watershed chloride data analysis.



## Objectives

- Compare new data against previous findings.
- Explore the practicality of site-specific criteria for chloride.
- Identify and observe changes within the watershed and at project monitoring locations which may affect water quality, channel stability, or site integrity.
- Weigh observations in context with water quality and quantity data collected at sites.
- Educate the public on the importance of water quality and quantity within the county and the Bitter Creek Watershed.

## Action Items

- Establish updated and credible data in a useable format and educate the public and steering committee, city and county officials on stream health and best management practices.
- Continue to have data analyzed by professionals in the field.
- Provide educational materials to the public regarding water quality concerns.
- Establish and maintain water-monitoring legacy sites.
- Encourage landowners to utilize pipelines, gated pipe, turbulent fountains, pivots, and other irrigation efficient conservation practices.
- Continue working with the steering committee to target water quality efforts.
- Promote landscaping practices as advanced landscaping alternatives.
- Continue to work on access agreements from landowners to collect credible water quality data.
- Install pet waste collection stations along walking paths.

### Proposed tasks for monitoring water quality: Recommended Specific Goals for the SWCCD During 2023

Specific project goals for the SWCCD during 2022 and through fiscal 2023 (July 2022 through June 2023):

- Maintain an Active Steering Committee (BCWBP MM 1). a. Annual meetings (April 2023). b. Maintain contacts (January 2022 through June 2023). c. Data reviews (March/April 2023). d. Review status of project implementation, cost, and funding assistance sources.
- Support WDEQ during 2022-23 monitoring in the watershed.
- Solicit participation and support as needed to address chloride TMDL/site specific planning and development.
- Conduct monitoring in addition to WDEQ monitoring as determined during the BKWAG meetings or during subsequent project reviews.

- Provide water quality data to outlying communities and all sewer and water districts within the watershed
- Provide a map in conjunction with the City and County, indicating stormwater drainages into Bitter Creek and Killpecker Creek.
- 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.
- 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.
- The BKWAG will continue to meet at least once a year, if needed, to review the progress of this watershed plan, and provide input on the district's water quality program.
- The district, in coordination with the BKWAG and WDEQ, will collect credible water quality data to illustrate the effects of implementation and gain an understanding of background conditions.
- The district will continue to monitor the Bitter Creek Drop Structure Project and check periodically for evidence of a head cut following seasonal flows and major storm events.

### Big Sandy and Little Sandy Watersheds

- The district is participating with the Sublette County Conservation District to provide on-going water quality data collection in the Big Sandy and Little Sandy Watersheds.
- The district has partnered with the Sublette County Conservation District on the Big Sandy Watershed Level 1 Study. The final report is completed and available.
- The district is currently finishing one small water projects in Sweetwater County that were identified in the Big Sandy Watershed Level 1 Study. (2020 projects)

## Water Development

The district completed a Level One Watershed Study with the Wyoming Water Development Office for the Bitter Creek Watershed and the east side of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area. The final report and executive summary can be found on the district website at <http://www.swccd.us/>

The district sponsored and submitted an application for a small water project in Sweetwater County.

In 2022, SWCCD completed one Wyoming Water Development (WWD) Small Water Project in the Big Sandy Watershed. Estimated cost \$6,449.75.

The district 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

## Soil Surveys

The Sweetwater County Soil survey encompasses 6.59 million acres or 98% of Sweetwater County. NRCS has completed 1.8 million acres of the soil survey area or 28%.

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| Acres Mapped     | 1,801,575.0 |
| Acres Not Mapped | 4,789,310.7 |
| Total Acres      | 6,590,885.7 |

### 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.
- Publicly accessible soil carbon databases for model development and validation.

## 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.
- Participate as a Cooperating Agency with the BLM and Forest Service to establish a relationship for land use management planning decisions.
- Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with partners to coordinate and cooperate in the various Environmental Assessment (EAs) and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs).
- Sweetwater County Conservation District will continue to work with local, state, and federal agencies on land use planning efforts.

### Local Governments

#### **Sweetwater County**

The district provides comments for Sweetwater County subdivision reviews and continues to give updates at the Sweetwater County Commission Board Meetings.

#### **City of Rock Springs**

Update and inform the City of Rock Springs the latest findings and review the progress of the watershed-based plan and provide input on the district's water quality program and the status of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

Partner with the Trees for Recycles Day held every spring in Rock Springs.

Update and inform the City of Rock Springs through the BKWAG the latest projects the districts are involved in 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 plans and projects and provide credible comments for the federal administrative record.

## Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI)

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 throughout Wyoming. (<http://www.wlci.gov/>)

## Upper Green Flaming Gorge (Tri-State) Watershed MOU

The upper Green River Flaming Gorge Watershed MOU ensures the 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.

## Community Education and Outreach

### General Objective

- Promote activities and programs increasing community awareness of conservation district activities and programs by utilizing Community Enhancement Grants.
- Work towards building strong public knowledge.
- Provide a friendly and visible resource to our local community for conservation information and assistance.

### General Action Items

- Continue to work with NRCS staff and help with the Local Work Group Meeting to address local resource concerns.
- 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.

## Seedling Tree Program

### Objective

To offer, promote, and establish tree planting in the Sweetwater County Conservation District which includes energy conservation, soil erosion reduction, environmental benefits, and wildlife habitat.

- 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.
- Participate in Trees for Recyclables Day and Arbor Day Celebrations.

## Administration

### Goals

To assist land users and land-use decision makers by initiating and participating in actions that will help protect soil, surface, and groundwater quality.

### Objective

To implement research, collect and store soil and water quality information, data and provide Best Management Practices to protect the natural resources' quality in Sweetwater County, which can and do provide the following:

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.

Meet WDA, WDEQ and BLM grant requirements and reporting deadlines.

Meet state and county funding requirements to include county and state budgets and Wyoming Department of Audit accounting.

### Action Items

- Comply with WDA and WACD financial policies to receive state funding
- Develop and maintain a legal District budget each fiscal year.
- Provide the Board of Supervisors accurate and timely financial information so that they can make appropriate decisions.
- Administer 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's 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 training to increase knowledge of natural resources and to stay informed of local, state, and national conservation issues.
- Research and pursue funding sources for District programs and local project concerns.
- Complete all grant funding projects and administer timely grant reporting.
- Maintain and update the District's Website. [www.swccd.us](http://www.swccd.us)



You can now find us in Green River:

550 Uinta Drive, STE E

Green River, WY 82935

(Back of the Golden Hour Senior Center)

Phone number: 307-875-4995

Where to Find Us Online: [www.swccd.us](http://www.swccd.us)

The SWCCD Board typically meets the first Thursday of every month at 4:00 p.m.