

SWEETWATER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCCD)  
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING  
Thursday December 7, 2023 – 4:00 p.m.  
550 Uinta Drive, Suite E, Green River, WY 82935

**REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING**

**Call to Order**

**Tom Burris, Chairman** called to order the meeting of the Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) at 4:00 PM on **December 7, 2023**.

**Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance**

**Tom Burris, Chairman** conducted a roll call and introductions. The following persons were present.

Tom Burris, Chairman and Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)  
Larry Folks, Vice-Chairman and Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)  
Stephanie Anderson, Secretary and Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)  
Henry Bliss, Member and At-Large Supervisor, (SWCCD)  
Karen Pecheny, District Administrator, (SWCCD)  
Randy Shipman, SWCCD Associate Supervisor  
Jeff Lewis, District Conservationist (NRCS)

Absent: Jean Dickinson, Urban Supervisor, (SWCCD)

**Minutes**

A **motion** was made by Larry Folks, seconded by Stephanie Anderson, to approve the November 2, 2023, minutes as written. Motion carried.

**Agenda**

A **motion** was made by Stephanie Anderson, seconded by Larry Folks, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report**

A **motion** was made by Henry Bliss, seconded by Stephanie Anderson, to approve the Treasurer's Report, and pay the bills in the amount of \$ 26,975.94. Motion carried.

**Special Reports**

**Water and Environmental Technologies (WET)**

The WET team (Josh Vincent/Bruce Nelson) was not able to make the meeting today, due to blizzard conditions in Montana. Staff will check with WET to ask about re-scheduling a meeting in January.

### Jeff Lewis, NRCS

- Reported on taking signups and trying to get surveys on the Henry's Fork. (weather related)
- Reported that allocations were done by counties now and not divisions this year. Sweetwater and Uinta allocation is \$200,000.00 and \$400,000.00 for salinity.
- Lewis explained that the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is not very popular in our area, because there is more interest in ranching than farming.
- Lewis handed out an update on the Wyoming Soil Survey Data Availability Status 2023. Lewis explained that the private ground is mapped and would estimate that half of Sweetwater County is now mapped. (attached)

### Randy Shipman, Associate Supervisor

- Shipman reported on the Explore Act bill and hearing that is before congress with Congresswoman Hageman. The bill is good except for verbiage on cooperating agencies and local governments. The bill encompasses all the recreation on federal lands and access along with the good neighbor authority/policy except for cooperating agency and local governments. In the bill they are striking out a portion of NEPA – partnership agreements. This goes back to the Infrastructure and Jobs Act, which ends in 2026, and all of this money is coming from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
- Reported on the cooperating agency concerns with the bill and the diminishing of cooperating agency as it stands. Strike local or state agency and change to state agency and local agency.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### Bitter Creek Updates and Actions

##### Drop Structure

- Folks has a call in with Larry Hicks about next steps for the project.
- Reported that LSRCD is working on a small water grant for the drop structure.

***UPDATE:** Larry Folks reported that Larry Hicks called and said he will have his engineer put together a scope of work and an estimated price quote for the drop structure repair, after the first of the year.*

#### SWCCD Annual Report & Plan

Get comments back to staff as soon as possible.

#### Wyoming Association of Conservation District (WACD) 2024 Annual Convention

The WACD 2024 convention will be in Area V. The Area V Directors are looking for a combined convention next year for host locations and potential venues. After discussion, staff was directed to place on the January agenda.

## New Business

### Terry Subdivision

Received a request from Sweetwater County to obtain a soils report for Terry Subdivision. This subdivision is proposing to split land from the Jarvie Ranch, the subdivision will be located between the East boundary of the Stoll's property and the West ROW of CR 13. Staff and Supervisor Bliss completed and will send the soils information to Sweetwater County. Anderson conducted an on-site field visit and took pictures.

### Seven Lakes Fence

The Seven Lakes Fence was constructed in 1980 and is 36 miles in total. Because of declining sheep use and increasing winter cattle use much of the fence was converted to a two-wire fence in the early 90s with the top wire at 38 inches and the bottom at 26. The fence is in poor shape and BLM would like to replace it with a wildlife, friendly fence with a smooth bottom wire and a marked top strand in order to continue to facilitate antelope migration through the area.

Four miles of the fence have already been replaced and we have an additional 3 miles contracted out for this next spring. The Lander BLM has started internal discussions about coming on board with this project and we would like to reach out to some of our other conservation partners as well. **Clayton Bolton**, Rangeland Management Specialist  
DOI-BLM Rawlins Field Office

No action was taken.

### Wyoming Association of Conservation District (WACD) Annual Convention

Supervisors Burris, Folks along with staff attended the Annual WACD Convention held in Dubois, WY. Congratulations to Chairman Tom Burris who was awarded "Supervisor of the Year" and to CJ Hadley who won "Outstanding News Reporter"

## Supervisor's Report

### Tom Burris

- Attended and reported on the WACD Convention that was held in Dubois.

### Stephanie Anderson

- Gave an update on WLCI and the two new watershed initiatives. Anderson talked to the coordination team and reported that they kicked the can down the road. The next meeting will be held in January with the coordination team.
- Anderson spoke with Cherrette Bonomo, the Forest Service is working on an agreement with the county and they hope to be moving in next to the District Office at the end of next month. Staff will include Cherrette's email on the Board agenda mailing list.

### Larry Folks

- Folks attended and reported on the Coalition of Local Governments (CLG) meeting held in Lyman.
- Attended and reported on the WACD Convention that was held in Dubois. The keynote speaker was Kacey Atkinson, WY cattle rancher, Kacey wrote the book: 10 miles past nowhere.
- Attended and reported on the federal partners agency meeting held in Green River.
- Reported on the Jackalope Wind Project and they projected 1,300 acres per tower.

### Henry Bliss

- Reported on the Terry Subdivision comments and soils report.

### Staff Reports

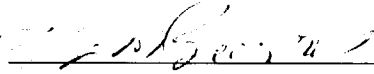
#### Karen Pecheny

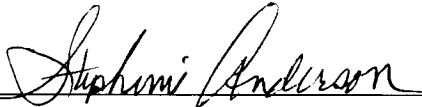
- Attended and reported on the WACD Convention that was recently held in Dubois.
- Agency updates from convention: WDEQ reported on hydrogen, wind, solar, and nuclear, as there is a lot happening in the energy sector. “Cooperative Federalism” with new rules will be coming out over the next year, and it will be a resource challenge to keep up with the new rules for WDEQ. EPA is not talking to the states as they write and implement the rules.
  - Working on legislation for carbon sequestration and geologic storage, they are currently working on three permits to construct the first six wells in Sweetwater and Lincoln County.
  - WDA reported on an extension of the farm bill, 85% is in the nutrition title. Working on a Regulatory Reduction Task Force with restricted travel
  - NRCS reported on equity and underserved communities, not just minorities, with an increase in diversity and building programs for Climate Smart Practices.
  - Reported on the WDA Water Quality Program, the program should have \$260,000. available for water quality and the Request for Proposals (RFP) will be out in April – May 2024.
  - Reported that the District’s will be receiving a Conservation District Records Retention Schedule. The schedule will go to WACD for further review.
- Worked on the Annual Report and Plan and all end of year reports for the District. The report is due December 30.
- Working on seedling tree applications and nurseries.

Information and Education

Information was included in Supervisor packets.

A **motion** was made by Stephanie Anderson, to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 4, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. with a work session scheduled for 3:00 p.m. at the SWCCD Office, 550 Uinta Drive, Suite E, Green River, WY.

/s/  \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman

/s/  \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary

//Submitted by Karen Pecheny/