



Sweetwater County Conservation District



2017



Annual Report

<http://swccd.us>

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.

Thank you!

Mary Thoman

Board of Supervisors

The Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) is comprised of individuals who have expertise, experience, interest or specific concerns with conservation issues. The Board of Supervisors are elected officials who serve four-year terms on a voluntary basis. There are three rural, one urban and one at-large position. Supervisors attend monthly District Board Meetings and oversee the activities and projects of the Conservation District.

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



Projects



Bitter Creek Drop Structure Project

SWCCD along with agency and funding partners are committed to the construction and stabilization of the Bitter Creek Drop Structure Project. Stabilizing the head cut would protect water availability for all users and prevent further erosion. The project helps to raise awareness about the importance of water quality, erosion flooding concerns and uses. The District looks forward to the completion of the drop structure and believes the new structure will help improve water quality, riparian habitats and serve as a fish barrier with the native flannel mouth sucker.



WDEQ Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

All sources that have the potential to deliver bacteria to Bitter Creek and Killpecker Creek need to be considered to solve this problem. In this case, the allocation approach broadly applies an overall load reduction goal to achieve water quality standards. Bacteria load reduction targets unique to each source type were not specified. Since implementation of this water quality improvement plan is voluntary for nonpoint sources and dependent upon the actions of watershed stakeholders, flexibility is provided with this approach.



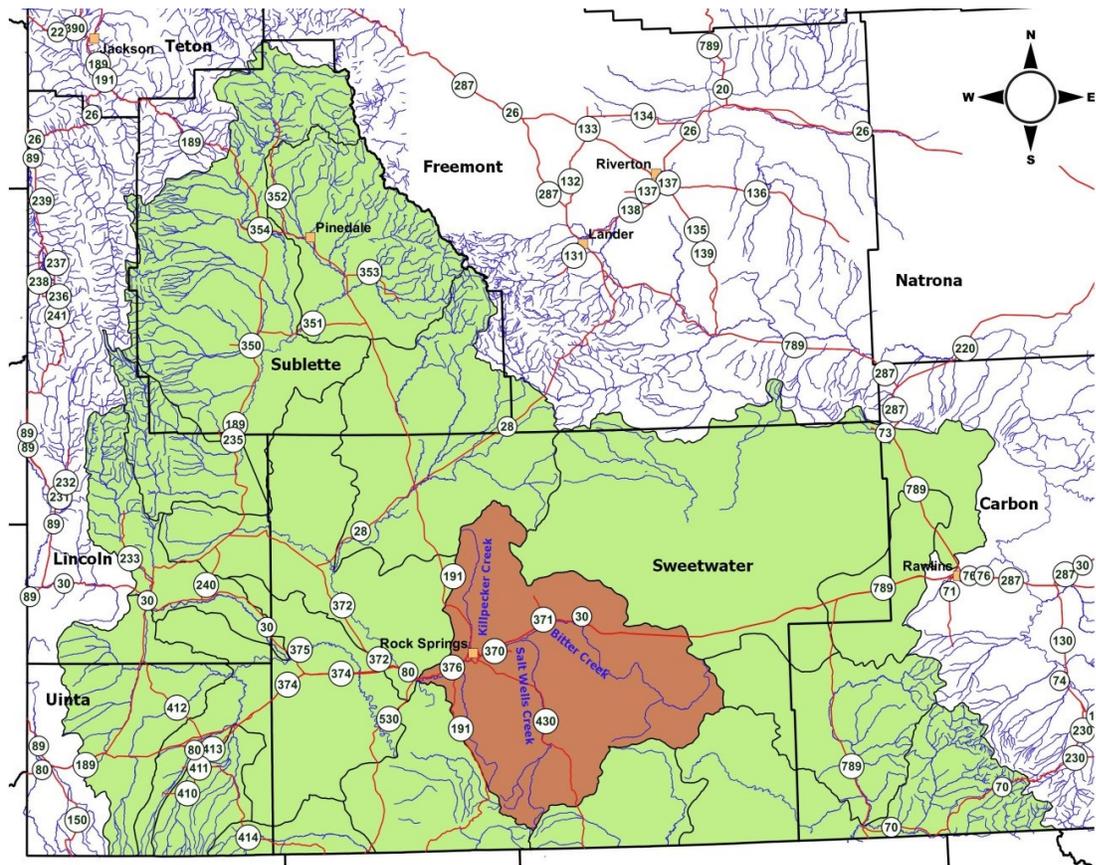
Wyoming Water Development Office Level One Watershed

Study – Bitter Creek/E. Flaming Gorge

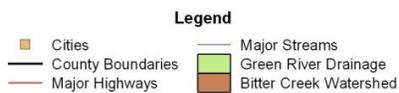
SWCCD applied for and were awarded a Level 1 Study. The project study area, covers a total of 2,853 square miles in the checkerboard areas extending from above Superior and following the Bitter Creek south as it drains into the Flaming Gorge to the Wyoming/Utah border. Forty percent of the land in the study is under private ownership and 60 percent is federal/state owned.

Water Quality

The Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) continued to conduct water quality and quantity monitoring within the **Bitter Creek Watershed** during 2016. Data collected from the monitoring is used to evaluate Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) 303d chloride and E. coli bacteria impairment listings in the watershed. Sampling has verified the impairment listings, allowed identification of areas in the watershed contributing to elevated concentrations of chloride and E. coli, and helped to establish a record of the flow regime and geomorphic characteristics within the watershed.



Bitter Creek Watershed Location in Southwestern Wyoming



Sweetwater County Conservation District plays an active role in water shed assessment and planning.



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 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, uses below Elkhorn Junction.

Big Sandy Working Group

The Big Sandy Working Group (BSWG) BLM continues to monitor pre- and post-season grazing along the Big Sandy Riparian Corridors as well on upland sites. The group formed in 1996 with the goal of preserving and enhancing the riparian areas and the water quality of the Big Sandy River from Farson to the confluence of the Green River. A 10 and 50 year vision of the desired condition of the Big Sandy River Corridor was developed early on.

Subdivision Reviews

The District has 60 days to review and comment on a proposed subdivision review. Within this review, the District will consider 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 Planning

SWCCD is heavily involved in federal land planning. Most of this work is done at the Coalition of Local Governments (CLG) meetings. The Coalition meets once a month to discuss and review federal plans and projects. The CLG consists of four county commissions (Uinta, Lincoln, Sweetwater & Sublette) as well as four conservation districts.

FAST FACTS



70%

Seventy percent of Sweetwater County is public land.

The District works with 5 BLM Field Offices. Rock Springs, Kemmerer Rawlins, Pinedale and Lander.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact:

Sweetwater County Conservation District
79 Winston Dr. Suite 103
Rock Springs, WY 82901
Phone: 307-362-5257

2017 Seedling Tree Program

SWCCD hosts many special programs throughout the year, such as the ever-popular seedling tree program. Last year the District sold **1,376** seedling trees and perennial plants. Buffaloberry and cottonwoods were the most popular species this year.

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.

Meetings and Conventions

Area V

The Area V Meeting was hosted by Teton Conservation District on September 8, 2016 at the UW Extension Office. Lincoln, Little Snake, Star Valley, Sublette, Sweetwater, Teton and Uinta County Conservation Districts attended the training. The agenda included presentations from Morgan Graham, GIS & Wildlife Expert, updates from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Wyoming Department of Agriculture. A tour of the Vertical Harvest Greenhouse was held in the afternoon. The greenhouse is a 13,500-sq. ft. three-story stacked greenhouse utilizes a 1/10 of an acre to grow an annual amount of produce equivalent to 5 acres of traditional agriculture.

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, Wyoming Water Development Office Level 1 Watershed Study for Bitter Creek and the Bitter Creek Drop Structure progress and design development.

Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) 2016 Convention

The 71st Annual WACD Convention was held at the Holiday Inn on November 14-17, 2016 in Riverton, WY hosted by the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts. The keynote speaker was Ann Moore, Center for Cowboy Ethics and excellence in Governance "Code of the West". The convention included the awards ceremony, live auction, and committee breakout sessions.

Partnerships

The Sweetwater County Conservation District Supervisor works cooperatively with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Program for Sage Grouse Initiatives and other Conservation Plans. SWCCD and NRCS schedules a Local Work Group Meeting to establish local priorities and ranking criteria for local applications.

Resources & Financial Management

Fiscal Year 2016 Budget

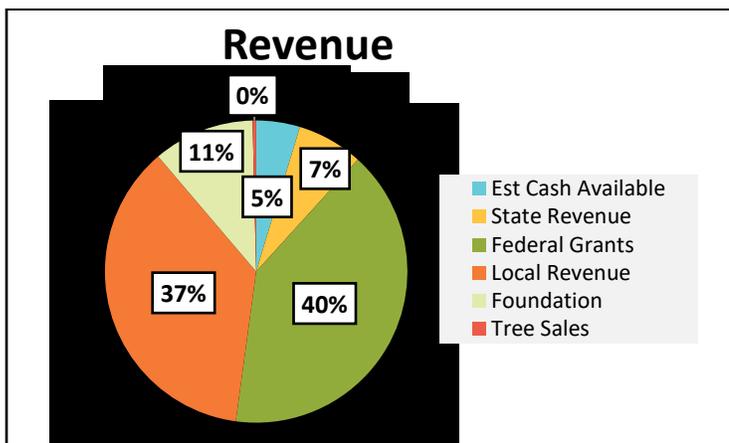
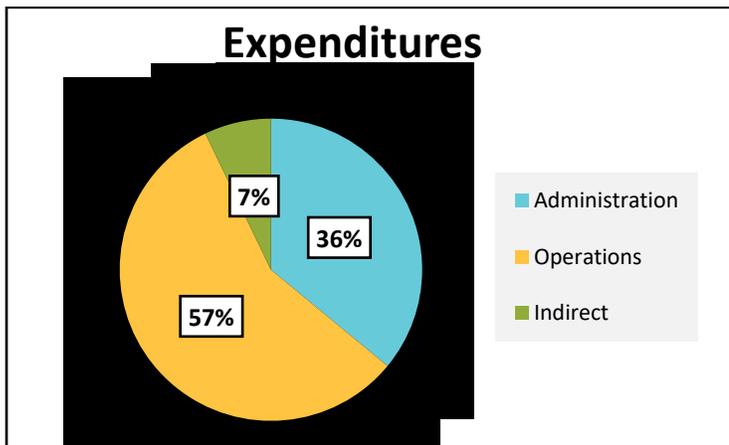
Expenditures

Administration	\$103,900.00
Operations	\$164,220.00
Indirect Costs	\$20,600.00
Total	\$288,720.00

Revenue

Local Revenue	288,720.00
State Revenue	\$57,815.00
Foundation	\$86,309.00
Tree Revenue	\$2,990.00
Federal Revenue	\$303,861.00
Subtotal	\$739,695.00

Cash on Hand	\$54,891.00
Total	\$ 794,586.00



Elected Supervisors



Mary Thoman Board Chairman

Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative - Executive Committee representative for seven SW Wyoming counties-a special federal initiative to provide for habitat improvement projects in the heavily mineral impacted SW Wyoming counties (see wlci.gov for more). Two-term Chairman of WLCI.

CLG Executive Committee - A Coalition of Local Governments consisting of four county commissions and five conservation districts in SW Wyoming (Sweetwater, Lincoln, Uinta, Little Snake River in Carbon County and Sublette). The CLG meets monthly to review federal plans and projects. They work with a legal, technical, economic, and wildlife team of experts to draft comments for forest and Bureau of Land Management plans and projects.

Big Horn Sheep working Group -Former Governor Geringer and Senator Thomas assisted the group of interested individuals and organizations in the initial stages. A Big Horn -Domestic Sheep Plan for Wyoming was developed and approved by the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission. Numerous protocols were developed for the Wyoming Game and Fish and others to follow when dealing with big horn sheep. The group was instrumental in obtaining a research component for Wyoming domestic-wildlife disease issues. The Legislature provides funding. The group meets annually to discuss the latest research and anything related to big horn sheep or domestic sheep interactions. (Plan is available on the WG&F web site)

Big Sandy Working Group - Federal livestock grazing permittees, interested parties, and the Bureau of Land Management have met for over ten years to address wildlife and domestic livestock issues along the Big Sandy River. A 50-year vision and monitoring plan have been developed. Wyoming Water

Development small project funding was matched with permittees and BLM funds to implement a series of projects including nine upland wells, three reservoirs, two pipelines and riparian corridor electric fencing. Five riparian sites are monitored in the fall and spring to measure use levels by livestock and wildlife. Fencing provides for summer rest in hopes of promoting willow growth along the river.

- Jack Morrow Hills SEIS Implementation – Serves as the District’s liaison in implementing the plan.
- Rock Springs resource Management Plan (RMP) Cooperator
- Regional Economic Model (REMI) and Transportation Plan
- Kemmerer RMP and Moxa Arch EIS – District liaison
- Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) Executive Committee Member



Tom Burris Board Vice-Chairman

- Eden Valley Irrigation District
- Bitter Creek Killpecker Creek Watershed Advisory Group - Co-Chair currently implementing the Bitter Creek and Killpecker Creek Watershed Plan.
- Seedling Tree Program Supervisor Liaison.



Jean Dickinson Board Secretary

Coalition of Local Governments – Liaison for SWCCD

Cooperating Agency to the Hiawatha EIS Programmatic agreement - Serves as the liaison for the District.

Rawlins Field Office Visual Resource Management Plan and ACEC.

Rawlins Resource Management Plan

Continental Divide Creston EIS – District Liaison
TransWest Transmission Line EIS – District Liaison

Energy Gateway South Transmission Line EIS – District Liaison

Rock Springs Resource Management Plan (RMP) Cooperator

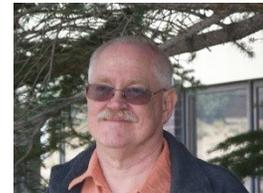
Sage Grouse Revision EIS - District Liaison

Ashley National Forest Motorized Travel Plan and Forest Revision- Serves as the liaison for the District

Daley Allotment Memorandum of Understanding, (MOU)

Serves as the liaison between the affected conservations districts, Rawlins Field Office, and Wyoming Game & Fish Department.

Tri-State MOU - Sweetwater Wyoming, Moffat County Colorado, and Daggett County Utah State NRCS for Wyoming, Colorado and Utah. - Serves as the liaison for the District.



Henry Bliss Board Treasurer

- Board Treasurer
- Computer/IT
- Website Design
- Co-Lead Bitter Creek



Stephanie Anderson Board Rural Supervisor

Recreation Program Manager for the Ashley National Forest.

District Staff – Special Thanks

Karen Pecheny –

District Clerk



Administrative Duties, which include - Administrate daily, monthly, quarterly, and annual records, budgets and financial reports for the District. She attends Board, Area V, committee, staff meetings, Conventions and various applicable training. Education and Outreach Coordinator and Tree Program Coordinator.

Justin Caudill –

Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) – Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI)



Justin is the Ag Program Coordinator for the WDA and WLCI, along with his full work load, he regularly attends SWCCD Board Meeting Board Meetings. The District appreciates his hard work, updates on projects, and help in finding funding sources, grant writing and wiliness to research. The District gives special thanks to Justin and everything that he brings to the District.

Dennis Doncaster –

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Hydrologist



Dennis is the hydrologist for BLM, and has helped the District with water quality projects on Bitter Creek and the Bitter Creek Drop Structure Project. Dennis continues to attend and support the Bitter Creek Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG) and its efforts for cleaner water. The District gives special thanks to Dennis for his knowledge and expertise.

Thanks to our Cooperators

Anadarko	Natural Resource Conservation Service	W. Wyoming Community College-Green River Center
Associate Board Supervisors		
Big Sandy Working Group	Questar Exploration and Production	Wexpro
Bitter Creek and Killpecker Creek Watershed Advisory Group	Representative Cynthia Lummis	Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom
BKS Environmental	Rock Springs Chamber of Commerce	Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
BP of America	Rock Springs Grazing Association	Wyoming Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Reclamation	Rocky Mountain Survey	Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
City of Green River	Seedskafee National Wildlife Refuge	Wyoming Department of Transportation
City of Rock Springs	Senator John Barrasso	Wyoming Game & Fish Department
Coalition of Local Governments	Senator Mike Enzi's Office	Wyoming Governor's Office
Colorado State Forest Service Nursery	Southwest Wyoming Industrial Association Sweetwater County	Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative
Congressman Lummis	Star Valley Conservation District	Wyoming Livestock Board
Conservation Restoration and Seeding	State Grazing Board – Dick Loper	Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation
Department of Agriculture	Sublette County Conservation District	Wyoming State Engineers Office
EnCana	Sweetwater County Agriculture Producers	Wyoming State Forestry
Environmental Protection Agency	Sweetwater County Libraries	Wyoming State Lands and Investments Board
Farm Services Agency	Sweetwater County Commissioners	Wyoming State & Trust Lands
Farson Feed Store	Teton County Conservation District	Wyoming State Planning Office
Environmental Design Engineering	Trout Unlimited	Wyoming Water Development Office
Farm Service Agency	Uinta County Conservation District	Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust
K.C. Harvey	U.S. Bureau of Land Management	
Lincoln County Conservation District	U.S. Fish and Wildlife	
Little Snake River Conservation District	U.S. Forest Service	
Muley Fanatic Foundation	U.S. Geological Survey	
National Association of Conservation Districts	University of Wyoming	
	Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	

SWCCD Website <http://www.swccd.us>

SWCCD has a Facebook Page. We hope you'll decide to "Like Us" and join by visiting **Sweetwater County Conservation District.**



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HYPERLINKS BELOW**

