

SWEETWATER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



Left picture - Existing Drop Structure before construction of new channel and drop structure. Right picture - New drop structure upstream of existing Drop Structure



Swallows photo: Tom Koerner/USFWS

Mission Statement

Conservation District Law - W.S. 11-16-103 et seq.

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 positions. 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

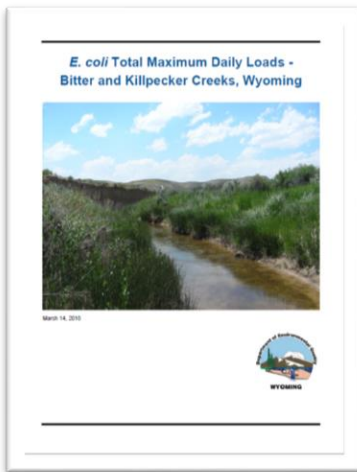


Projects



Bitter Creek Drop Structure Project

The Bitter Creek Drop Structure Project has finally crossed the finish line. With the newly constructed irrigation ditch, stilling basin, lining of the new creek channel and re-routing Bitter Creek to the drop structure, the project is almost complete. The District looks forward to the completion of reclaiming the disturbed area and will start reclamation in the fall of 2018. This project could have not been possible without the many players who partnered with the District in this important endeavor.



WDEQ Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) = A plan to attain and maintain water quality standards

- States are required to identify all lakes and streams that are not meeting water quality standards
- Waters that are not meeting water quality standards are placed on the State's list of impaired waterbodies (i.e., the 303(d) list)
 - The primary contact recreation standards are not met in the Bitter and Killpecker Creeks. Levels of *E. coli* exceed the criteria and both waterbodies are on Wyoming's 303(d) list.
 - TMDLs must be prepared for all waterbodies on the 303(d) list

What will the TMDL mean to you?

- Implementation of the TMDL will result in improved water quality for recreation, with side benefits for fisheries, aquatic life other than fish, wildlife, industry, agriculture, drinking water, and scenic value uses.
- The TMDL program is **NOT** self-implementing (no regulatory authority to require implementation of the plan).
 - For nonpoint sources, implementation is voluntary.
 - Point sources (already regulated under the Wyoming Pollution Discharge Elimination Program [WYPDES]) will be required to meet limits established by the TMDL upon permit renewal.
- Completion of the TMDL will open the door for State and Federal funding.



Watershed Studies

Wyoming Water Development Office Level One Watershed Study – Bitter Creek/E. Flaming Gorge

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.

1. Complete Watershed Inventory and Optimize stakeholder participation
 - Collect Available Information
 - Identify water resources related issues
2. Develop Watershed Management Plan
 - Prioritized practical solutions to identified issues
 - Create a “Roadmap” for SWCCD and stakeholders
 - Evaluate benefits of Plan component projects
 - Promote WWDC Small Water Project Programs (SWPP) and applications
3. Identify permits and costs

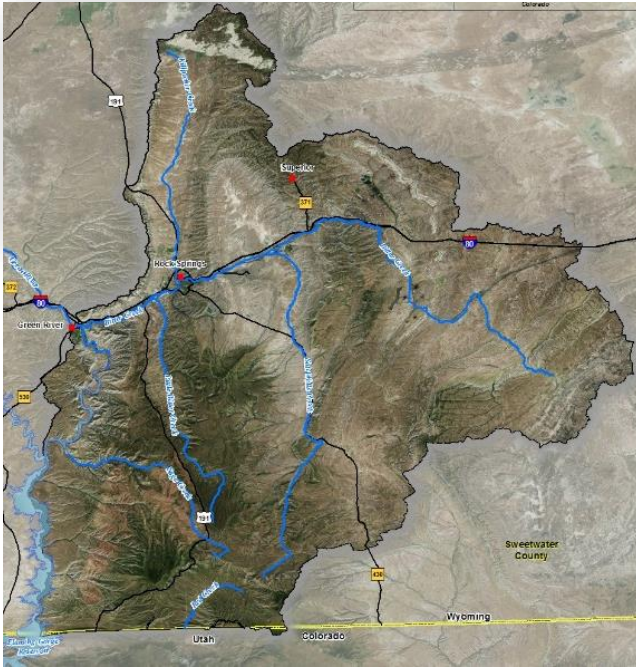
 Draft Report: August 2018 and Final Report: November 2018

Wyoming Water Development Office Level 1 Watershed Study - Big Sandy

Sweetwater and Sublette County are partnering on the Big Sandy Watershed Study. These studies are a complete watershed inventory of the study area. The study will also provide a great opportunity for local stakeholders and users to bring water related projects forward for conceptual development and funding opportunities, as they relate to water development and rehabilitation.

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

The Little Snake River Conservation District (LSRCD) applied for eight WWDC small water projects in Sweetwater County. The 2018 small water project total is \$581,000. The commission voted to fund all the projects. The landowners have base operations in the LSRCD but own lands in Sweetwater. Since both districts have a working relationship they can cooperatively file applications for the mutual benefit of their cooperators. SWCCD thanks LSRCD for their work on the small water project program and most importantly these projects will help landowners with water development in Sweetwater County.



Bitter Creek/E. Flaming Level 1 Watershed Project Study Area

Water Quality

Bitter and Killpecker Creek are listed on the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) 303d chloride and E. coli bacteria impairment listing.

- WDEQ impairment listings.
 - Bitter Creek for E. coli and Chloride.
 - ❖ **From Green River to Point of Rocks.**
 - Killpecker Creek for E. coli.
 - ❖ **From Bitter Creek to Reliance.**

Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) continues to monitor site conditions and provide support to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) during water quality and quantity monitoring in the Bitter Creek watershed during 2018. Data collected from monitoring will be used to catalog watershed characteristics and to evaluate and manage the WDEQ 303d chloride impairment listing in the watershed.

Water Quality

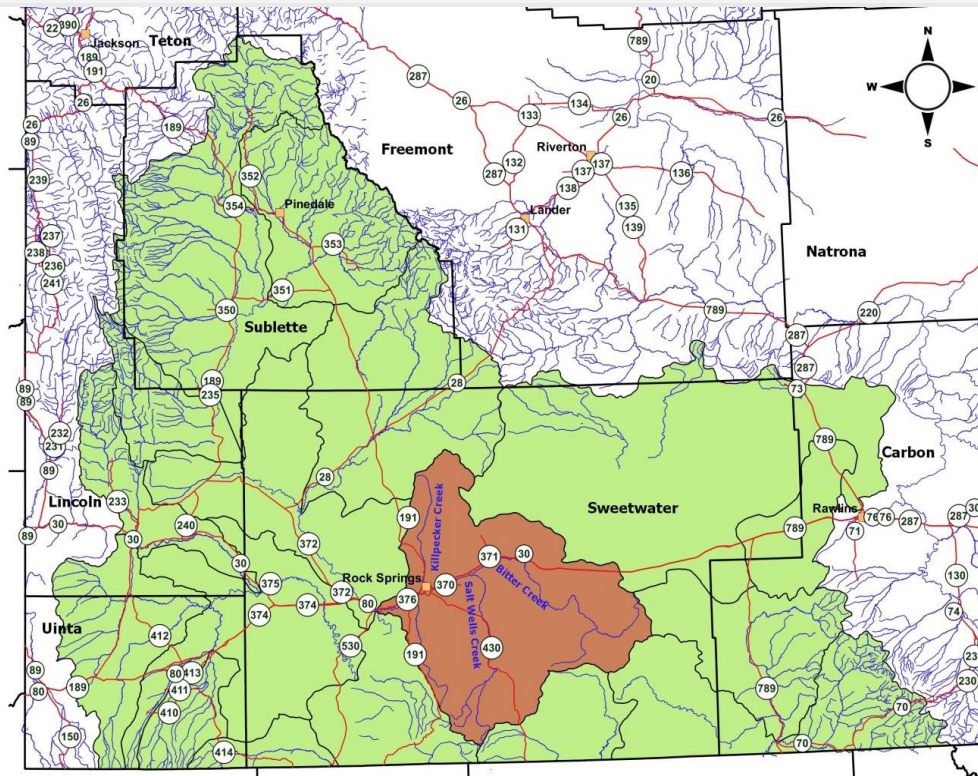
Sweetwater County Conservation District plays an active role in watershed assessment and planning.

Conducted
Water Quality
Monitoring
2004-2017

Compiled a data
set from the last
13 years

Maintains
contacts with
citizens and
agencies

Provides a
support role in
the development
of the TMDL



Bitter Creek Watershed Location in Southwestern Wyoming



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, uses below Elkhorn Junction.



Bitter Creek

SWCCD Watershed Reconnaissance Monitoring Sites

Site	Stream	Dates	Latitude	Longitude	Township	Range	Section	Ownership
DM-1	Deadman Draw	4/10, 7/12, 10/10	41.68003	-108.73389	20 N	100 W	30	BLM
TM-1	Ten Mile Draw	4/10, 7/12, 10/10	41.67816	-108.73274	20 N	100 W	30	BLM
BC-18	Bitter Creek	4/10	41.67727	-108.79097	20 N	101 W	27	County
SWC-1	Salt Wells Creek	4/10, 7/12, 10/9	41.63084	-108.98807	19 N	103 W	14	BLM
BC-10	Bitter Creek	4/10, 7/12, 10/9	41.64861	-108.99786	19 N	103 W	2	BLM
BC-22	Bitter Creek	7/12, 10/9	41.66490	-108.95430	20 N	102 W	31	County
BC-11	Bitter Creek	7/12, 10/9	41.66426	-108.95253	20 N	102 W	31	County
BCS-4	Bitter Creek Seep	7/12	41.58858	-109.22671	19 N	105 W	35	Private
BCS-3	Bitter Creek Seep	7/12	41.58483	-109.22672	19 N	105 W	35	City
BC-2	Bitter Creek	7/12, 10/9	41.56026	-109.29172	18 N	105 W	7	Private
LBC-1	Little Bitter Creek	7/12, 10/9	41.56009	-109.29087	18 N	105 W	8	BLM
BC-3A	Sweetwater Creek	7/12	41.57303	-109.24080	18 N	105 W	3	City
RSTRIB	RS Storm Channel	7/12, 10/9	41.57590	-109.26208	19 N	105 W	33	County
KC-RR1	Killpecker Creek	7/12	41.66884	-109.22629	20 N	105 W	35	Private
HT-1	Horsethief Canyon	10/9	41.67923	-108.91728	20 N	102 W	28	WYDOT
PD-1	Patrick Draw	10/10	41.55888	-108.55290	18 N	99 W	3	Private
BC-7	Bitter Creek	10/10	41.50522	-108.53254	18 N	99 W	26	BLM
KC-12	Killpecker Creek	7/12	41.68586	-109.22878	20 N	105 W	26	BLM

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.

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 four county commissions as well as five conservation districts. (Uinta, Lincoln, Sweetwater, Sublette, 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 and mineral development.

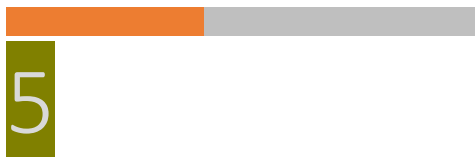
Subdivision Reviews

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.

Fast Facts



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



Seedling Tree Program

SWCCD hosts many special programs throughout the year, such as the ever-popular seedling tree program. Last year the District sold 939 seedling trees and perennial plants. Buffaloberry and poplars 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. Trees 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.

22nd Annual Trees for Recyclables

For the 22nd year in a row, the 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 were able to take advantage of free trees and help the environment by bringing their recyclables to the Recycling Center.



Education

By using educational tools such as storm drain markers and EnviroScape Models to help teach students about non-point and point source pollution, runoff and the importance of clean water.



Green River Girl Scout Troop learning about storm water and where that water drains to. The scouts are gluing decals on storm drains on Second South Street in Green River. "Only rain down the drain" We all will benefit by taking steps to prevent stormwater pollution of our streams rivers and lakes.

Meetings and Conventions

The **Area V Meeting** was hosted by Sweetwater County Conservation District on September 6, 2017 at the Granger Community Center. Lincoln, Little Snake, Star Valley, Sublette, Sweetwater, Teton and Uinta County Conservation Districts attended the training. An underground Trona mine tour was held early in the morning at Genesis Alkali LLC. (formally Tronox) The agenda included updates from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Wyoming Department of Agriculture. A discussion on the Special District Task Force and resolutions were brought to vote. A special presentation was given by Wanda Burget and Julie Lutz from the Wyoming Mining Natural Resource Foundation (WMNRF) on Candidate Conservation with Assurances (CCA) for Sage Grouse in Southwest Wyoming.



Area V Attendees touring the Tronox/Genesis Energy Mine

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) 2017 Convention

The 72nd Annual WACD Convention was held at the Ramkota Hotel on November 27-30, 2017 in Casper, WY hosted by the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts and held in conjunction with the Wyoming Stock Growers. The convention included the awards ceremony, live auction, and committee breakout sessions.

Partnerships



Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Sweetwater County Conservation District Supervisors 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 each year to establish local priorities and ranking criteria for local applications. The local priorities are reviewed at an area meeting and then taken to the State Technical Team.

Local Work Group Priorities for 2018

1. Grazing Land Management 2. Invasive Species 3. Irrigation Water Management 4. Water Quality 5. Forest Health 6. Fish and Wildlife Habitat 7. Streambank/Riparian Area Protection 8. Soil Quality 9. Wetlands 10. Excessive Erosion 11. Energy 12. Prevention of the Conversion of Agricultural Lands to Non-Agricultural Use



Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI)

The WLCI combines the resources of multiple groups across southwest Wyoming to build a common vision for this large area, or landscape. The WLCI vision is for an area that balances open spaces, abundant wildlife, traditional agriculture and production of energy and other resources. Supporting this vision is use of science-based information and local expertise, development of partnerships, and exchange of information. This is the tenth (10) year.

Sweetwater County



District Supervisors have spent over 2,700 hours of volunteer time working on projects, attending meetings and overseeing the operations of the District. Conservation District Board members are the only locally elected board charged specifically with the responsibility of representing local people on natural resource issues.



Wyoming Department of Agriculture

Wyoming Department of Agriculture is helping with water quality improvements in the Bitter Creek Watershed through their water quality grants and water quality lab and equipment appropriations. The District have several state water quality funding applications open. The funding is very important to enhance water quality in the state.



The Sweetwater County Board of Supervisors (SWCCD) meets the first Thursday of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the SWCCD Office. Meetings are open to the public.

PERSONNEL

Karen Pecheny, District Clerk

Associate Supervisors

Bonnie Cannon

Mike Freimuth

Barbara VanMatre

NRCS STAFF

Jeff Lewis, District Conservationist

Adam Clark, Soil Conservationist

Hillary Walrath, Salinity Coordinator for Henrys Fork of the Green River
(Trout Unlimited Partner Position)

Contact Information

Sweetwater County Conservation District

79 Winston Drive, Suite 103

Rock Springs, WY 82901

Phone: 307-362-5257

Email: admin@swccd.us

Website: www.swccd.us

Resources & Financial Management

Fiscal Year 2017 Budget

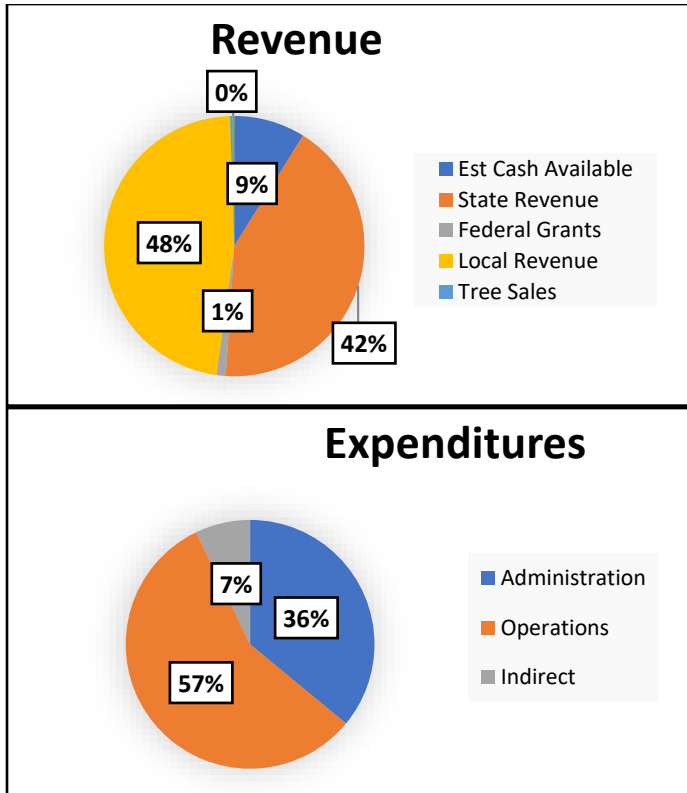
Expenditures

Administration	\$99,500.00
Operations	\$139,148.00
Indirect Costs	\$21,200.00
Total	\$259,848.00

Revenue

Local Revenue	\$259,848.00
State Revenue	\$231,695.00
Tree Revenue	\$1,419.00
Federal	\$6,288.00
Subtotal	\$499,250.00

Cash on Hand	<u>\$48,750.00</u>
Total	\$548,000.00



Thanks to Our Cooperators

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

