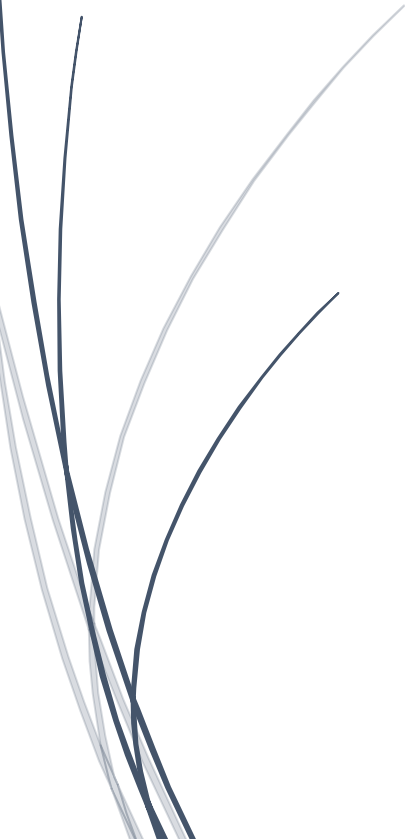



Sweetwater County Conservation District
Plan of Work
Fiscal Year 2019



Sweetwater County Conservation District
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Board of Supervisors

Mary Thoman, Chairman..... Rural Member
Tom Burris, Vice-Chairman Rural Member
Jean Dickinson, Secretary Urban Member
Stephanie Anderson, Member..... Rural Member
Josh Coursey, Member-At-Large Member

Associate Supervisors

Barbara VanMatre
Nick & Hillary Walrath
Bonnie Cannon
Mike Freimuth

Technical Support Staff

Jeff Lewis, NRCS District Conservationist Natural Resource Conservation Service
Adam Clark, NRCS Soil Conservationist..... Natural Resource Conservation Service
Jennifer Dutton, Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency
Sadie St. Clair, FSA Staff, USDA Farm Service Agency
Hillary Walrath, Salinity Coordinator, Trout Unlimited

Fiscal Year 2018

The Annual Budget Hearing for the Sweetwater County Conservation District was held at 10 am, July 18, 2018, at the Conservation District Office.

Anticipated Expense

Administration	\$100,500.00
Operations:	\$122,000.00
Indirect Costs	\$ 21,500.00
State & Federal Grants	\$ 64,900.00
Tree Program	\$ 500.00
Total	\$309,400.00

Anticipated Revenue

Estimated Cash Available	\$ 14,893.19
State Revenue	\$ 28,824.00
Federal Grant	\$ 36,076.00
Local Revenue	\$260,000.00
Tree Program	\$ 1,000.00
Savings Interest	\$ 50.00
Total	\$340,843.19

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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.

Objectives:

- Determine if BMPs are effectively improving water quality.
- Determine what additional BMPs should be implemented.
- Document changes in water quality since the comprehensive watershed study of 2006.
- Continue to work with WDEQ in the development of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The Bacteria TMDL is complete. It does not have an Implementation Plan attached to it. The TMDL was completed and approved by EPA on April 23, 2018.
- Update the 2006 Bitter Creek Watershed Management Plan, to include the nine-key elements. The purpose of the update is to develop a watershed-based plan for the Bitter Creek watershed which addresses current management strategies and goals to improve water quality.

Action Items:

- Establish updated and credible data in a useable format and educate the public 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.
- The Wyoming Water Development Office on the Level 1 Watershed Study. The District applied for and received a Level 1 Study of the Bitter Creek Watershed and East side of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area (FGNRA).
- Continue to work on access agreements for landowners to collect credible water quality data.
- Create and update the 2006 Bitter Creek Watershed Management Plan to become a watershed-based plan. (a DEQ approved watershed-based plan will make BMP's the District recommends in the plan to be eligible for 319 project funding). The District successfully received a WDEQ Section 205(j) funds to update and re-write the plan.

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Proposed tasks for monitoring water quality:

- The BKWAG, the District, the County, and NRCS will continue, and attempt to expand, the cost-Share programs for BMP in addressing water quality by providing the technical assistance to apply for funds and documenting resource concerns.
- Continue to work on best management practices to improve water quality.
- 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 support for the Bitter Creek Beautification Project by assisting the City of Rock Springs in the implementation of this project.
- 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.
- Develop an Annual Report of Progress regarding the watershed project and make available to watershed residents and the WDEQ.
- 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.
- Completed the Bitter Creek Drop Structure Project. The newly constructed irrigation ditch, stilling basin, lining of the new creek channel and re-routing of Bitter Creek to the drop structure. Reclamation and contouring have been completed. 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, US Fish & Wildlife Partnership Grant. The Sweetwater County Commission supports the project and has provided money for the 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 collection in the Big Sandy and Little Sandy Watersheds.
- The District is partnering with the Sublette County Conservation District on the Big Sandy Watershed Level 1 Study.

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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 applications and for small water projects in Sweetwater County. (2019 projects)

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

Soil Surveys

Objective

The Sweetwater County Soil survey encompasses 6.59 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	<u>4,789,310.7</u>
Total Acres	6,590,885.7

- Products will include:
 - a) Improved maps and knowledge of the distribution of U.S. carbon stocks
 - b) Soil survey databases, selectable by land use and management, on soil carbon levels and related properties
 - c) 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
 - d) 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 (EA)'s and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)'s.

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 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 Arbor Day 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) – 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 throughout Wyoming. (<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.

Community Education and Outreach

Objective

Promote activities and programs increasing community awareness of conservation district activities and programs.

Work towards building strong public knowledge.

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 with the Local Work Group Meeting to address local resource concerns.

Commence work with Sweetwater County schools with an emphasize on water quality.

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.

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Seedling Tree Program

Objective

To offer, promote, and establish tree planting in the Sweetwater County Conservation District which include:

- 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

Goal

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 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 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.

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- Maintain and update the District's Website and Facebook page.
- Provide ongoing computer and information system support for the District.